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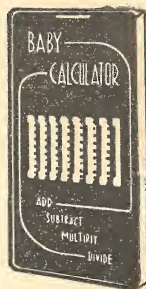
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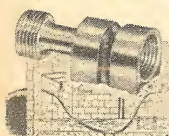


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# Science Fiction QUARTERLY

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STORIES

Volume 4

May, 1956

Number 3

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What they had, worked; all right, but it wasn't what they were after — and what were the implications of this discovery?

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ROBERT W. LOWNDES, *Editor*  
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MARIE A. PARK, *Asso. Ed.*

*Cover by Ed Emsb, from a scene in "One Of Them?"*

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What was the meaning of the blurred and multiple images in the screen? Why did they shift so often, and occasionally disappear?

# NO FUTURE IN THIS

*Featured Novelet of Time's Dilemma*

**by Robert Randall**

*illustrated by Orban*

THE REVEREND Sean Aloysius Riley, D. D., Ph. D. S. J. smiled contentedly at the massive brown-bound ledger in front of him as he totted up the last of a column of figures and double-checked them. He set down the final total in his neat, austere hand and his smile grew broader.

"Exactly two hundred fifty-six million, three hundred ninety-four thousand, eight hundred and two dollars," he said out loud, in his most sonorous, rolling tones. He repeated the figure a second time, even more resonantly.

There was no one else in the office to hear him, but Father Riley liked the way the words sounded. They reverberated nicely in his small study.

Chuckling amiably to himself, he put the ledger inside a desk drawer, placing it carefully over the latest copy of the *Daily Racing Form*, locked the drawer securely, and returned the key to the zipper pocket in his cassock.

He leaned back in his chair, picked up his breviary, and contemplated its rich quarter-morocco binding for a moment. Then his eyes drifted to his feet, in their accustomed position on

his desk. He looked at his distorted reflection in the shiny black surface of the polished shoes, considering what implications Aquinas might have been able to draw from the distortion. He wondered—

The phone rang.

Father Riley took his feet off the desk, glanced at his watch, and frowned. No one should be calling him at this hour; he still had ten minutes of free time left to himself, and he had come to treasure his scant minutes for meditation.

Oh, well; he shrugged and pushed the answer button. The face that came on the screen was young and worried-looking. "Father, I hate to interrupt you, but something's screwy down here and we can't figure it out. Could you come down right away?"

The priest lifted a black, bushy eyebrow and speared the man in the screen with a glance from a cold, blue eye. The other eye was squinted, almost closed; it was a favorite trick of his.

"Couldn't you have called Dr. Treadwell, Jerry?" he asked in a too-soft voice. "After all, he's the man to

call on when troubles pop up. He told you that himself."

Jerry grinned. "I know what you're thinking, Father. But Dr. Treadwell is in his *sanctum sanctorum* too, and it's just as holy for him as yours is for you. He can't be reached by phone; he shuts the damned—pardon me, Father—he shuts the phone off."

"I know he shuts the damned thing off," Father Riley said coolly. "I would, too, except that someone might need me."

The grin left Jerry's face. "Well, I can't actually say that this is an emergency, but I'm glad that Treadwell can't be reached." He nervously put a hand up to smooth a wayward cowlick, but to no avail. "Father, we need someone with *brains* to figure this one out."

"That's not the proper way to speak about your superior," said Father Riley in mock severity. "But since you put it that way, I'll be right down." He cut the connection.

HE TOOK off his cassock and reluctantly put on the tight, uncomfortable, black uniform jacket with the golden crosses on the lapels—the uniform of a chaplain in the Space Service. After checking to see that the drawer containing the ledger was properly locked, he left his study and took the elevator to the basement of the Spatial Research Building.

Jerry Stein was waiting for him at the entrance to the sub-electronics lab.

"Well, Jerry?" Father Riley asked when he saw the short, dark technician waiting and still trying unsuccessfully to comb his hair. "Come on in, Father," Stein said.

The priest peered in through the heavy, welded transite window. "You haven't got any haywire set-ups in there, have you?" he asked.

Stein shook his head. "Nope. This is all shielded stuff; you won't need a suit."

Father Riley touched the opener,

and the door slid aside. He motioned Stein in ahead of him and followed him over to an intricate maze of crystal, plastic, and silver that spread over one section of the lab bench.

Standing beside it were two more men, wearing dark-green technicians' smocks. Sam Quinlan was a tall, mild-looking blond who seemed to be continually bored, as though there were nothing in the world that could possibly interest him. Lee Nelson was short and thin, with a hatchet nose and a perpetual smirk.

Quinlan smiled lazily as the Jesuit approached. "Come to see our circus, Father?"

Nelson rubbed his hands together, and his smirk almost changed to a grin. "Sure. Come on over, Father; see if you can figure this one out. It's one for the books—and not the Good Book, either."

Riley stepped over to the gadget and frowned. "What's the trouble? Isn't this the test apparatus for the interspace field? I see you've made a few changes."

Stein nodded. "Yeah. We connected in the viewscreen to see what we were doing." He pointed to a screen which was covered with a sheet of cloth.

Father Riley gestured to it, also. "Why the draperies?"

"We wanted to tell you what we did," Quinlan said. "This needs the proper buildup for you to really appreciate it."

THE PRIEST pulled up a chair and sat down. "All right, let's hear your buildup."

"First, Father, are you aware of what we're doing—exactly, I mean?"

Riley snorted. "I probably know as much about this project as—as Treadwell, at least. Let me see: you've been running tests on the interspace effect; you're supposed to be doing research on the possibility of using it as an interstellar drive."



Stein nodded. "Right."

"Okay. What's that got to do with a TV screen, then?" He glanced quizzically from one to another to the third.

According to Bleekman's Equations," Quinlan said, "when an object is suspended in a powerful enough sub-electronic field, it ceases to exist in this universe. It goes into the so-called interspace, and—"

Father Riley held up a hand. "If this is your idea of buildup, spare me; the question of what happens has never been settled, anyway—that's what you're supposed to be finding out. Just how elementary is this buildup going to be?"

Quinlan's broad, lazy smile didn't waver. "That's elementary enough. Here's the sticker: You see, we *followed* the blasted object—and we still don't know where it's gone!"

Riley shook his head. "Huh?"

"We rigged up a TV camera inside a little antigravity shell, so that we could maneuver the camera around wherever we wanted to," Stein explained. "Then we put the whole apparatus into the field projector. It vanished, all right, and we still have TV contact with it. But look what we're getting." He walked over to the screen and pulled the cloth off. "We didn't shut it off, or fiddle with the circuits in any way; come take a look."

Father Riley heaved himself ponderously out of the chair and walked across the lab to see what Stein was pointing at.

The scene mirrored in the screen was the interior of the room they were in—the sub-electronics lab. At a quick glance, Riley could see that the pickup point was situated at the approximate center of the sub-electronic field that had been forced into being by the throbbing subetheric generators on the table.

The room was recognizable, though, Father Riley saw at once, oddly distorted. It reminded him of the curious

reflection in his polished shoes. *What would Aquinas make of this?* he thought in wonderment.

The room was recognizable, all right, but what was going on inside it was chaotic. There were several people in the room, standing, walking, moving their hands. Some of them seemed to walk through each other as though they didn't exist; others would abruptly vanish, to reappear elsewhere in the room. All of them moved with blurred, jerky motions. And there were too many of them.

FATHER RILEY recognized himself in four different places! No, three. One of him had vanished. Quinlan Nelson, and Stein were there, too, represented by three or four and sometimes five different figures each. Even the formidable Dr. Treadwell was there in several editions, all of them gesticulating frantically.

*Dr. Treadwell?* Hastily, Riley turned away from the screen and glanced around the room to see if Treadwell had entered. He hadn't; he wasn't in the room at all.

"I see that Dr. Treadwell has made his appearance this time," said Nelson. "I figured he'd get into the act before long." The smirk was still on his face, but there was a sort of grudging respect in his voice.

"One of the reasons we called you," Stein said to Father Riley, "was that we saw you on the screen when you weren't even here."

The four men watched the kaleidoscopic crowd scene for several seconds in silence. Finally, when the silence was becoming oppressive, Quinlan said: "Just what's going on, Father?"

The priest bit at his lower lip. "I don't know," he said. He looked up. "Have you checked all your circuits?"

Nelson nodded. "Sure we have. Thoroughly. Twice, as a matter of fact."

Riley absorbed the statement silent-

ly. He was well aware that Nelson didn't consider a priest the proper person to be sticking his nose into the realm of physics. He knew that, according to Nelson's way of thinking, the right place for the Reverend Sean Aloysius Riley was not a physics lab, but a quiet monastery where he could spend his days arguing about the quantity of angels that could stand on the point—or, for variety, the head—of a pin.

"We've checked everything we can," Quinlan amended. "We couldn't get at some of the high-voltage stuff without shutting off the current; and we didn't want to do that until we checked everything else. Besides, we wanted you to see it."

"And Dr. Treadwell," Nelson added.

The priest turned and looked down at Nelson, reflecting that the little man's face was best described as *ratty*. "Mr. Nelson," he asked, deliberately not understanding, "Why should you want me to see Dr. Treadwell? Is something the matter with him?"

Nelson's face looked pained, as if he were just barely repressing a curse. "I meant that we wanted Dr. Treadwell to see the machine before we shut it off," he explained. "Not that we wanted you to see *him*."

"We're not sure we'll get the same effect once we turn it back on," Stein said. "So we're not turning it off."

Father Riley studied the weird cavortings taking place on the TV screen and smiled admiringly. "You've sure got a lulu of an effect there now."

He walked over to the control board and studied it carefully.

"These control the antigravity shell?" he asked.

"That's right," said Quinlan. "Standard investigator controls. This one moves it left and right; this one forward and backward; and the third one controls the altitude. And here's your swivel control to rotate the pickup

through the full three hundred and sixty degrees."

RILEY NODDED and put his hand on the swivel control. He began turning it slowly, watching the scene in the screen. The camera panned around the room as he twisted the knob, and the priest's eyes narrowed as he watched the screen for some sign of stability in the shifting, kaleidoscopic scene.

It looked like a movie film which had been quadruply or quintuply exposed, with breaks and omissions in the action. Oddly, the background remained the same—or nearly so. The walls were solid and unmoving; the sinks and cabinets didn't change; the desks remained where they were. But the people! They were a myriad of ghosts, flickering, changing, disappearing, walking through each other, multiplying and dividing with dizzying rapidity. At times, they seemed to have three or four arms or legs, and their faces were blurred and almost unrecognizable.

And yet, as he watched, he could see that there were only five men in the room. After eliminating all the duplications—no easy task, since no one stood still for long—he could see only himself, Nelson, Stein, Quinlan, and Treadwell.

Perhaps, he thought, if he changed the location of the camera, he could tell more. He reached out and turned the altitude control to "up."

Instantly, the scene changed. It was still the inside of the lab, seen from the same location, but the ghostly figures which had moved chaotically across the screen vanished. The background became foggier, although it remained unchanged and stable.

"How's that?" the priest murmured. "They're all gone." He returned the control to neutral, and the figures reappeared; but they were not the same figures this time.

The room seemed to be filled with ghosts, most of them wearing the uniforms of the Space Service. And not just ordinary officers' uniforms, either; Riley recognized several wearing the white stripes of full generals. Father Riley frowned, trying to figure out just what was going on. *It would bewilder even St. Thomas*, he thought, and the image of a bewildered Aquinas pleased him immensely.

"I'll be damned," said Quinlan's voice softly. "What in the devil are a bunch of general officers doing there? They weren't there a minute ago; where'd *they* come from? The same place Treadwell did?"

"It's simple," said Nelson. "We've got a psychotic machine; the doggone thing has hallucinations."

"Or a good imagination," Stein said.

"Let me follow around with this altitude control a bit," the priest said. He moved the lever again and again; but the scene didn't change—only the people in it. Then he tried the directional controls. Nothing happened; they had no effect whatsoever. "That's funny," he said softly.

"Screw it as hell," agreed Quinlan. "I mean—"

"That's all right, Quinlan," the priest said. He stood up and walked over to the meter panels, pulled out a notebook, and jotted down the readings.

"Jerry," he said, "would you mind turning the altitude control down, just as if the a-g shell were away up in the air? Bring it down to the origin."

AS STEIN moved the control, Father Riley watched the meters; only one of them moved. One potentiometer moved steadily toward zero, then it stopped.

"Hey, Father," Quinlan called. "Come look at the screen now!"

Riley walked back to the screen.

There were no ghosts on the screen now. The camera was pointed directly

at the screen, where the four men were grouped. And that was exactly what the screen showed: four men grouped around a screen, doing exactly what they were doing.

They looked at the screen for a long moment. Then, almost as one, they swivelled their heads to look at the center of the sub-electronic field, where the camera presumably was.

There was nothing there.

"Man, I don't *get* it," Nelson said.

None of them had heard the door slide open, and they were unaware of another presence in the room until they heard Dr. Treadwell's rasping tenor voice say, "Well, well, *well!* All as busy as little beavers, I see."

Father Riley whirled immediately; but before he could say anything, Lee Nelson interposed. "We were waiting for you to come down, sir; we've got something here you ought to see."

"Hmnn." Treadwell's tight lips were curved into what he presumed was a pleasant smile. He rubbed his big nose with a forefinger and looked inquiringly at Father Riley.

"What seems to be the trouble, Padre?"

It took the better part of half an hour for them to bring Treadwell up to date on the weird operation of the interspace projector. At first, Treadwell just asked questions, which the three technicians answered while Father Riley maintained a discreet silence. As Treadwell began to see more and more of what was going on, his voice began to become more and more authoritative.

Finally, he said: "It appears to me that there is something wrong with the scanning circuits and the controls in the antigravity shell. We'll cut the field and take a look at them. Then we'll go over the receiver carefully. We'll have to try this again when the machine is properly in working order."

Stein glanced in appeal at Father Riley, who shook his head. "I don't



think that's proper procedure, Dr. Treadwell," the priest said carefully; "it seems to me we've stumbled on something important."

Treadwell raised his eyebrows. "And just what would that be, Padre?"

Riley lifted his shoulders a little. "I'm not sure, but I don't think the answer is in faulty circuits."

"Really, Padre," said Treadwell, smiling patronizingly, "what else could it be that gives such peculiar ghosts? We've all seen multiple ghosts on orthodox TV screens, haven't we?"

FATHER RILEY said nothing. He had never liked Treadwell's use of the "padre" form of address. *One of these fine days, he thought, I'm going to call him Herr Professor Doktor Oberst-Leutnant and see what his reaction is.*

"Look at it this way, Padre," said Treadwell, in what he must have thought was a mild, explanatory voice. "You are a mathematician, and a brilliant one—no one doubts that." He paused, and Riley studied the other's face, waiting for him to get to the point.

Seeing no response forthcoming, Treadwell continued. "But I am a physicist; I know sub-electronics and sub-nucleonics as well or better than any man in the field. After all, I did my doctorate work in calibrating sub-etheric field potentials."

The priest nodded silently, heroically refraining from pointing out that Treadwell had done his work under the supervision of the late, great Dr. John Purvis, and hadn't done a thing since.

"We'll be glad to let you look at our results," Treadwell continued importantly, "but please leave the experimentation to us."

Quinlan and Stein, obviously embarrassed by their superior officer's conduct, pretended to be busily checking the machine; but Lee Nelson walked

up to the priest and patted him amicably on the arm.

"Just leave it to us, Father Riley," he said. "We'll get you the dope to work with—you don't have to worry."

The Jesuit smiled. "Excellent, gentlemen. May I say, then, that the figures I require will be the degree of circuit error and the changes in capacitance and reluctance caused by them. I would also like wiring diagrams showing where the circuit errors lie."

"We'll have them for you tomorrow," Treadwell said, smiling. "We'll do everything we can to co-operate."

"Excellent. Thank you, doctor," said the priest stiffly. Then he turned and strode out of the room.

He was boiling mad.

## 2



HE NEXT afternoon, Jerry Stein rang at the door of Father Riley's study and stepped inside when the door slid open.

The priest put down the copy of the *Racing Form* he had been reading and smiled at Stein. "Hello, Jerry; am I to presume you have the figures I asked for yesterday?"

Stein grinned sheepishly. "Naturally not. Treadwell doesn't even know I'm up here. You and I both know there was nothing wrong with those circuits. I'm surprised you didn't punch him upside on the end of that bloated beak of his."

"I must admit," said Father Riley, slowly, "to a certain feeling of antagonism. However, that's no reason to allow a venial sin to lead to a mortal one."

"I didn't know a punch in the nose

was a mortal sin," Jerry said with a broad smile.

"It isn't," Father Riley said darkly, "but murder is."

"I see what you mean." Stein paused a moment, letting his eyes rove around the chaplain's office, and then said: "I just thought I'd come up and tell you what we've found out so far, and see if you have any ideas."

The priest grinned and leaned forward in his chair. His blue eyes seemed to gleam mischievously. "Don't tell me; let me guess. You didn't find anything. There's nothing wrong with either component of the setup—at least when they're tested separately. As long as the a-g shell isn't in the field, it responds perfectly to the controls; as soon as it's shoved into interspace, it responds only to the altitude control by shifting the scenery around."

"Yup," Stein agreed, nodding. "That's what you found out yesterday, and that's what Treadwell has taken twenty-four hours to confirm. So you tell me: what's wrong?"

FATHER RILEY'S smile faded a little. "There's nothing at all wrong. The setup is working just exactly as it ought to be working."

"Now just a minute," Stein protested. "What do you mean by—"

"I'll explain," the priest said. "The setup's all right; we're the ones who are fouled up. You have to be relativistic in these scientific matters," he said, rubbing a finger back and forth over the worn binding of the breviary on the desk.

"Our error," the priest continued, "lay in our thinking—our interpretation of what Bleeckman meant by 'interspace.' He probably didn't know, himself, what his own equations meant—in terms of the physical universe. We have to go back to Einstein's General Relativity Equations for the first glimmerings of an answer. I've been doing some work on it; the calculations

aren't difficult, but I haven't finished them yet."

"What is it? Do you know what it is?" Jerry Stein's voice indicated excitement, and his eyes brightened.

"I think so," Riley said slowly. "But," he added, forestalling the question on the tip of Stein's tongue, "I'm not going to say anything until I'm sure."

Stein looked disappointed, but he kept it to himself. He stared around the room once again, assimilating everything the priest had said. During the moments of silence, Father Riley busied himself with tidying his desk and straightening the dogeared, tattered books perched in one corner. He waited patiently.

Finally Jerry emerged from thought. Glancing curiously at the *Racing Form*, he said, boyishly, "Got any tips on the races, Father?"

The twinkle came back into Riley's eyes. "I don't think you came up here to talk about sub-etheric physics at all," he said accusingly. "You were just looking for a good tip. Shame on you—asking a priest to be a track tout!"

Stein chuckled. "You don't kid me, Father," he said. "I know you can talk to horses; come on, what's the sure thing for tomorrow?"

Father Riley looked judiciously at the *Form*. He closed his eyes for a moment. "Personally, I would play the daily double; try Star Beast in the first, and Meadowgrass in the second."

"Dogs, both of 'em," retorted Stein. "Some tip. Say, how come you never bet on your own tips? Don't you believe in gambling?"

"It's not that," the priest said thoughtfully. "I just don't care to break the Seventh Commandment."

Stein thought for a moment. Father Riley could see his lips silently framing "first...second..." At length Jerry said, "Is it *stealing* to win at the races?"

"It can be," Riley said. "Now, about

this interspace phenomenon," he went on, abruptly changing the subject. "I've got a little experiment I'd like you to try, if you would."

"Yeah? What is it?"

"I want you to promise you'll do just as I ask, without asking questions. Promise?"

Stein nodded solemnly. "I guess so," he said; "I can trust you, Father."

"Thanks. Listen carefully, then: you'll need two synchronized chronometers, and an extension on the gravitational potentiometer so that you can see it from the TV screen. Now, I'll show you how to set them up."

He took a piece of paper from his desk and began sketching with a pencil.

JERRY STEIN had been gone for three hours by the time Father Riley finished computing the equations he had started working with. He leaned back and looked at them, cocking his feet up on his desk. They looked as though they were ready to program through the Space Service's new DEMONIAIC computer.

He reached out and dialed the Computer Building. A terribly efficient-looking young man responded, but when the priest finished outlining his request all he got was the curt, "I'll have to refer you to the officer in charge."

Riley waited patiently until another face, fleshier and older, came into view.

"I'd like to use the DEMONIAIC," Father Riley said without preamble.

The officer in charge nodded and said, "I'll switch you to the programming officer."

"What kind of runaround is this?" the priest demanded, without avail. The programming officer, a red-faced man named McGloin—whose confessional, could Father Riley have revealed it, would have made quite a novel—turned even redder when he

saw he was talking to the priest, stammered an apology, and explained that he could do nothing without the okay of the programming director.

"He's the highest jackass you've got. eh? All right, put him on."

They put the programming director on, finally; and he gave the priest an answer he didn't like.

Riley broke the connection and dialed again; this time, he got the office of the adjutant.

The adjutant of Sahara Base was a small, wiry colonel who wore a perpetual look of astonishment.

"I want to talk to the General," Riley demanded. His tone was carefully chosen to indicate he'd brook no nonsense.

The colonel glanced at the golden crosses on the priest's collar and at the major's stripes on his shoulders. "I'm sorry, Chaplain; the General's given orders not to be disturbed."

"I know," said Riley; "he's taking his afternoon nap. Wake him up."

The colonel's expression of astonishment became more genuine. "Now, see here, *Major*," he said, emphasizing Father Riley's rank, "when the general says he is not to be disturbed, he is not to be disturbed."

The priest's blue eyes lost their warmth and became icy. "Colonel, please tell General Borwin that Father Sean Riley wants to talk to him on a matter of utmost importance. I'll take the responsibility. If you don't get him up, I'll come stomping into his office and do it myself."

The colonel's hesitation was short-lived. "Very well, Major," he said finally. "If it's that important—"

A FEW MOMENTS later, General Borwin's face came on the screen. His brows were frowning over his corvine nose. "What's the trouble, Father?"

"I'm mad, Charlie," said Father Riley levelly; "God help me, I'm mad



clear through. Just because you felt you needed me, I left a perfectly good teaching position at Sacred Heart; I accepted a commission in the Service so that I could work with the Research Corps. I go to all the trouble of getting special permission from my Order just to work on this thing for you. And what do I get? I get a birdheaded moron like Lieutenant-Colonel William Treadwell, that's what I get! Bilious Bill Treadwell! The original splinter in the bannister of progress!"

"Calm down, Father," the general said, patting the air with a hand.

"I am perfectly calm, Charlie; I'm just mad. That loathsome—"

"What's Pappy Treadwell done now?"

"He's put one over on both of us," Riley said.

"How do you mean?"

"I refer to Special Order Number 33672, dated yesterday, which prohibits the use of the DEMONIAC to any personnel except officers of the Research Corps, without explicit permission of the Commanding General. The request was signed by Treadwell, and you okayed it."

Borwin frowned. "Yes, I remember— By Heaven! I never thought about it! It seemed harmless enough! But the thing was directed toward you, of course; who else would want to use the computer?"

"Exactly," said the priest. "I'm not a member of the Research Corps; I'm only a chaplain. I'm bound by the Space Service rule forbidding properly ordained ministers from entering any other branch of the service."

"Well, that's easily fixed, Father," Borwin said; "I'll phone over the okay right away."

"That's fine, Charlie," Riley said. "but it's not enough. I want Treadwell kept out of my hair. If I can't do what I came here to do, I'll resign my commission and go back to teaching."

Borwin nodded. "I'll see what I can

do about Treadwell, Father. It's not always easy to put personnel in the place where they're most capable, you know; and it's not easy to get them out of that place sometimes if they don't work out; you know what I mean. But keep in touch with me, eh?"

"I will, Charlie." Father Riley cut the connection. He sat back, allowing the tension he had accumulated over the past half hour to seep out of his nervous system. Coping with pass-the-buck-ism was something he had never learned to do very well, and wilful, blithe ignorance of the kind exemplified by Treadwell required all of Riley's self-control to tolerate.

His moment of relaxation over, he muttered a brief prayer and left. Twenty minutes later, he was in the Computer Building, feeding data into the DEMONIAC and allowing himself to be caught up in the magical rhythm of the sounds coming from the vast mechanical brain.

An hour after that, he was frowning at his results, twice as puzzled as before.

### 3



LL HELL broke loose the next morning. It was heralded by the appearance of Dr. Treadwell at Father Riley's study door. After a night of uneasy dreams—which Riley had

concluded at 0500, unable to sleep longer, with four hours of deep brooding and a reading of St. Bonaventura to calm his nerves—the Jesuit was not at all anxious to see Treadwell. It was an unpleasant way to begin a day, certainly.

But it was plain that Treadwell was in a state of mind which could only be referred to as a high dudgeon, and, af-

ter dreamily considering and rejecting the possibility of shutting off the screen and leaving Treadwell in the corridor, Riley pressed the button and let him in.

As soon as he was admitted, Treadwell said, without preamble: "What is the idea of assigning experimental work to my men without my permission. Major?"

Father Riley looked at him with a one-eyed squint. "Oh? Did I?" he asked innocently. "I don't recall making any such assignment."

"Lieutenant Jerome Stein was in the laboratory yesterday afternoon, doing absurd things with a chronometer. It was your idea," Treadwell snapped.

Father Riley folded his hands across the front of his cassock. "That it may have been," he said mildly; "but it wasn't an order."

"Am I to understand, Padre," Treadwell asked in a suddenly treacly voice, "that you refuse to accept the responsibility for Lieutenant Stein's actions? Am I to assume that he did it on his own?"

"Am I to assume, Lieutenant-Colonel Treadwell," Father Riley said coldly, "that you discourage independent research on the part of your personnel?"

"I—" Treadwell began, but the chiming of the phone cut him off.

Father Riley pushed the answer button. General Borwin's sharp-nosed face formed on the screen. "Father, what's this thing about a time machine?" He sounded utterly bewildered.

"You have my report, General," said Riley; "I got the data from Lieutenant Stein this morning."

"I want a complete run-down on this, Father," Borwin said, visibly shaken. "I'll be down in the lab in ten minutes. I'll get hold of Treadwell, too."

Riley glanced at Treadwell and then back at General Borwin. "Dr. Tread-

well is here now, General. We've been discussing the results."

"I see," Borwin said, looking even more puzzled. After a pause he added, "My compliments to the colonel, and tell him I'll be down in the lab." He cut off.

Treadwell was already rising. "I'll be there," he said to the priest. "We'll see about this thing."

JERRY STEIN was waiting by the elevator when Father Riley came out of his office. He looked worried. "In a jam, Father?" he asked.

Riley shook his head. "Not in the way you mean; and you're not, either. Thanks for the data on those clock readings."

"Thanks? Hell—I mean—well, it was a pleasure, Father." He pushed his hair back out of his eyes as the elevator arrived.

General Borwin and two other general staff men were waiting for them in the lab.

Treadwell was glowering near the machine, but he was saying nothing; his lips were clamped in a tight line. There was no one else in the room.

"Father Riley," Borwin said, "General Kahane, and this is General Robinson."

Father Riley nodded a brief acknowledgement to the introductions. Kahane was a tall, scholarly-looking man with sunken cheeks and piercing eyes; Robinson was of middle height, and more than a little roly-poly in build.

The five men stared silently at each other for a moment. Finally Father Riley spoke. "I suppose you're all wondering what this is about," he said.

Kahane smiled. "Quite true, Father," he said in a surprisingly deep voice. "Please fill us in on the entire affair." General Robinson echoed the statement.

"Briefly," Riley said, "I think that Dr. Treadwell and his men have come

across one of the most revolutionary phenomena in the history of physics. Yesterday, after Dr. Treadwell's staff made the discovery, Dr. Treadwell asked me to do the mathematical work while he did the experimental research. It hasn't taken long, thanks to the assistance of Dr. Treadwell's staff, especially Lieutenant Stein. The data supplied by these gentlemen was invaluable."

He moistened his lips. "Before I explain what is happening, I would like to give a small demonstration of the effect itself." He turned to Dr. Treadwell, and smiled. "Colonel, do you mind if Lieutenant Stein assists me in this?"

He squinted at Treadwell amusedly. Treadwell, he knew, had already sensed that he was getting credit where no credit was due; and he was ready to jump to get it, even though he was becoming a little suspicious of the Jesuit.

"Go right ahead, Pa—Father," he said.

Stein stepped over to the TV screen and turned it on.

"You gentlemen will notice that this—" he pointed toward an object lying on a nearby table—"is a standard antigravity shell, carrying a television camera and the normal controls."

**T**HE OBJECT was almost exactly the size and shape of a regulation football: a prolate spheroid with a glass lens at one end. General Kahane walked over, bent down to it in a stiff motion of his hips, and scrutinized it closely without making any comment.

"Jerry, will you test the controls?"

Stein moved his hands over the control knobs. The a-g shell lifted from the table, did a quick circle around the room, went into an Immelmann turn, and settled back down to the table.

"Fine," said Father Riley. "Now, let's see what happens when the shell is subjected to a sub-electronic field in

accordance with Bleeckman's Equations." Catching a puzzled frown which crossed Robinson's face momentarily, the priest added, "According to theory, the shell goes out of the physical universe into what Bleeckman called 'interspace.' But he didn't know what the nature of this space was. Go ahead, Jerry."

Stein threw a switch. A high singing note was audible for half a second, hanging and quivering in the air, and then the a-g shell disappeared.

"All right, gentlemen," Riley said. "If you'll step over toward the screen, you'll be able to see what is happening to the camera."

The three generals watched with considerable curiosity, and Treadwell with none at all, as Jerry put the apparatus through its paces. The ghostly, flickering images were quite impressive.

When the demonstration was over, Father Riley said: "Now, the question is: What is causing this phenomenon? And the answer is very simple: That a-g shell, camera and all, has gone into the future."

He stated it so simply that it took several seconds for the information to register on the brains of the men present. They said nothing, but Father Riley watched the play of emotion on their faces as their attitude shifted from one of curiosity and puzzlement to one of befuddlement, incredulity, and awe.

"That's what 'interspace' is," Father Riley went on calmly; "what you are seeing on that screen is what may happen in the future."

He paused a second time, on the old theory that you can't communicate anything to a general the first time. After a lapse of a few seconds, General Borwin asked, "Why is it so jumpy?"

"The future is indeterminate," said the priest. "It's a matter of probability. At any given instant, the future is



determined by the factors then existing in the universe. At any subsequent instant, the factors have changed slightly, and the future is likewise changed slightly. The image we have here is a reflection of the future; they change also."

*Aquinas again*, he thought, watching the dumbfounded faces of his audience.

"But the future doesn't look like—" General Robinson began, and allowed his sentence to trail off when he realized how foolish it sounded.

FATHER RILEY smiled. "You have to realize that if there are two or more probable futures at any given time, they all show up on the screen—since, from our point of view, no one of them is the entire 'future.' The less probable they are, the less vividly they appear. That's why there are several images of each person on the screen—three of me, four of General Borwin, and so on."

"I still don't follow you," said General Robinson weakly, shaking his head.

"All right. Let's look at some photographs Lieutenant Stein took of the screen last night." Father Riley pulled an envelope from his briefcase and took out a handful of prints.

"Look at this one," he said. "We're all here. General Borwin, you are here—here—and here. And there's a very dim image over here in the corner which might be you. Now, if you'll notice, there is a standard chronometer hung on the wall. The time is *now*."

They all crowded around to look at the pictures, paying special attention to the clock.

"But I'm not standing in *any* of those places," General Borwin objected after a few minutes of careful study.

"Exactly," the Jesuit said. "As of any given instant, the most probable future is predictable. That does not,

however, take into account any *improbable* things which *may* happen between that instant and the time predicted."

"Then the machine is useless for predicting the future?" asked General Kahane.

"Worthless," the priest agreed.

There was considerable reaction to this. Treadwell scowled angrily, as if he had been planning to fool the generals into thinking the machine was of immense strategic value; General Borwin and General Kahane exchanged irritated glances, and General Robinson began to voice some sort of objection but changed his mind.

"You mean that?" Borwin asked. "Utterly worthless."

"Let's say—impractical," Father Riley replied. "But it is still an immensely valuable bit of property, even if it's not a perfect crystal ball."

"I still don't understand how the thing works," Borwin said. "What happens? Physically, I mean."

Father Riley shrugged. "I don't know. It's utterly beyond me. The camera certainly isn't visible now, although you'll notice that in all of those pictures at least one of us is looking at it."

He walked over and stared at the screen. "Evidently the a-g shell can't be moved from its position, once it has gone into interspace. The directional controls don't respond at all; but the altitude control throws it into the future."

"If the control is set at zero, according to the gravitational potentiometer, the camera shows what is happening right now, in the present. Or, perhaps, a fraction of a second in the future, so small that we can't detect the time differential." *Angels on a pin*, he thought wryly, without allowing the smile to break the surface.

"Now, obviously," the priest continued, "the less time there is between now and the future depicted in the

screen, the fewer possible changes there will be between now and then. That's why the scene looks perfectly all right when it's set at zero; it's only a tiny fraction of a second in the future. However, the greater the displacement from the present, the greater the number of possible variations in the future depicted.

"Have I made myself clear?" he asked, glancing at the smoldering face of Lieutenant-Colonel Treadwell, who was standing to one side, very much angered.

GENERAL KAHANE shot a sharp glance from Riley to the machine and back again. "How can you tell how far in the future it is?" he asked.

"That's where the altitude control comes in," Riley answered. "In acting against a gravitational field, the a-g shell, instead of going up, goes into the future. Lieutenant Stein has calibrated the gravitational potentiometer against two chronometers, one of which was hung in front of the sub-electronic field. The other one, synchronized with the first, was checked against the time shown on the screen; and that, in turn, was checked against the gravitational potentiometer.

"The hardest thing to predict the future of are, of course, those things which are most likely to change. The exact position of a human being isn't easily predictable at all. Therefore, they blur rather easily, and we get that multiple-exposure effect."

"I see," said Robinson happily. "Chairs and tables don't move around much."

"Exactly," Riley agreed. "The more stable structures—like desks, the walls of the room, and so forth—aren't as difficult to predict. Even without the machine, we could easily bet that the building would be here tomorrow. But as for the movements of human beings—who knows?"

Father Riley moistened his lips and

cleared his throat. In the momentary interval, Dr. Treadwell stepped out of the corner, walked over, and studied the machine in a proprietary manner. Then he looked at the priest, and Father Riley met his gaze inflexibly.

There was a long silence. Then Treadwell moved into the center of the room, smiled benignly, and asked, "Are there any more questions? We have quite a bit of work to do before we submit our written report to the staff."

There were plenty of questions.

## 4



WHEN FATHER RILEY returned to his study, an hour later, weary with the cares of the world—and especially with the problem of coping with General Robinson's scientific ig-

norance, it was with a feeling of deep gratitude.

His office had a warm, somehow well-worn appearance that belied the cold chromium exterior of the building that housed it. Father Riley felt that it was a symbol of his double life—that when he stepped from the shiny corridor to the office he had so carefully made dingy, he was leaving behind the world of potentiometers and time machines and stepping, once again, into an older, more familiar, more congenial world.

He poured a drink from the water-cooler and sat down at the battered, deflated pneumochair, and let his eyes rest on the crucifix on the wall. And, suddenly, a new realization came to him, and he smiled.

*Even the Cross is chrome-plated*, he thought with some amusement. Even that. He leaned back, thankful that the

demonstration was over, and rested.

He knew he'd have a round of serious thinking to do—not the merely mechanical kind of brainwork he'd done in preparing his speech of an hour before, but true *thought* in what he considered the deepest sense of the word. He was morally uncertain, once again, and needed the answer to a new question.

It was no longer, *what would Aquinas think of this?* No, that sort of facetiousness was insignificant. Father Riley reached for his breviary.

*No. Not Aquinas. What does—He—think of this machine that sees the future?*

Father Riley stirred restlessly in his seat. It was a problem that he'd have to attack from both sides; it was a penalty for serving two masters.

Suddenly, the doorbell chimed.

"I'll never have any peace," the priest muttered. He glanced at the screen, half expecting and dreading the sight of General Robinson, who would undoubtedly drive him to some sort of blasphemy. But he was relieved to see that it was only Jerry Stein. Riley smiled; if it had to be anyone interrupting, he was glad it was Jerry. He pushed the door-opener, and Stein came in.

"That was a beautiful performance, Father, but I saw through it."

Riley looked up. "What do you mean, Jerry?"

"May I sit down?"

"Of course," Father Riley said. "I don't believe in keeping a man hanging on ceremony, even if he is an infidel." He chuckled and drew out a chair.

After a pause Jerry said, "It took me a little time to figure it, but two things hit me dead center. In the first place, your daily double came in. Paid \$841.70. Your bets always come in. *Always.*"

Father Riley twisted nervously in

his chair. "I wondered when you'd notice that," he said.

"But you don't play them, do you? You never take your own tips. You told me why, the last time I was in here: you think it's stealing to take money on a sure thing."

"Let me show you something, Jerry." Father Riley walked over to the desk and pulled out his ledger. He handed it to the lieutenant. "See that last page? That's what I've made in the last several years, just betting on the horses."

Stein took the book and read the entry. "'Two hundred fifty-six million, three hundred and—' *Father!* I didn't—I never suspec—"

FATHER RILEY laughed heartily. "It's all on paper, of course; I've never actually made any bets. But if I had, I'd be worth better than three quarters of a billion dollars today." His heavy jowls curled upward in a soft smile. "I wagered rather heavily on the daily double, myself," he said.

Stein looked from the book to the priest and back. "Do you have any explanation for it, Father?"

Riley shook his head. "That's the beauty of it; I don't. I just look at the records and guess. They nearly always come out right."

"But not every time?" Stein asked.

"Not every time, no. What are you leading up to?"

Stein stood up and paced around the study, not replying. He walked over to the bookshelf and examined the volumes there—an almost equal mixture of ecclesiastical works and the most recent mathematical texts and other scientific books—and then gazed up at the crucifix. After a while he said, "The second thing I noticed was that you weren't the least bit surprised to see three generals at the meeting this afternoon. You weren't, were you?"

Father Riley met the young technician's gaze coolly. "No," he said in



a soft voice. "Not at all; I had a hunch about them."

Stein smiled. "I thought so; your hunches hardly ever miss, either."

He began to pace up and down again. "You told the generals that the machine was worthless for predicting the future," he said. "There were too many probabilities, too many changes. And you told the truth; as far as the average man goes, the machine is worthless. But it isn't to you—is it, Father?" He looked triumphantly at the priest, who sat by his desk, arms folded, smiling enigmatically.

"You made guesses on what was going to happen, according to what you saw on the screen when we first showed it to you. You took hunches on which of the many probabilities out there was the strongest. And your guesses were right—as they almost always are."

Father Riley stood up. "Very shrewd. What's your point, Jerry?"

"You ought to see it for yourself. You know where you fit into this picture. You can *guess* it," Jerry said.

Father Riley took his seat again. He folded his hands together and looked at them for a long time, thinking of Aquinas and Aristotle and Bonaventura and of a Higher Authority; and he wished he had had the chance to hold that conversation with himself before Jerry's arrival.

*It's too late now, Riley thought, for meditation. My decision is due.* He glanced up at the young officer.

"Jerry, I don't think God intends man to look into the future. The Church has always forbidden fortune-telling of any kind. And what is this? It's a form of fortune-telling, isn't it?"

**T**HE PRIEST looked at Stein as if waiting for confirmation, and then hurriedly went on. "I don't bet on horses, except to myself, as a private amusement. I don't base my life on my prescience—or whatever my power is."

"But—"

"Hear me out, Jerry. I have a power, true enough; but I feel that it is against the precepts of the Church to use the power for gain—and I'd feel that way even if I hadn't taken a vow of poverty. The future is in the hands of God, Jerry, not man."

"The Church isn't against gambling, as such. Life is a gamble itself; you're young, but you've found that out. It's a process of taking one chance after another. But loading the dice is something else again; and so is using cards with marked backs."

He studied the backs of his hands for a moment, gathering strength to set forth his decision. "I'm afraid I can't be party to any such thing, Jerry. I won't let myself be yoked to your machine."

The lieutenant listened quietly. When Father Riley had finished, he smiled and said, "That's about what I thought you'd say. I'm a pretty good guesser myself, though I'm not in *your* league."

He stood up. "Maybe we could finish this discussion down in the lab," he suggested. "I feel more at home there than I do up here," he said, indicating the worn books and the crucifix and the tattered cushions.

Father Riley shook his head. "No, Jerry. Let's have it out up here; I feel more at home up here, and I haven't been home very much lately."

Jerry smiled. "All right. Let me tell you why I don't agree with your viewpoint, Father."

"Tell away, my boy."

Stein took out a cigaret and lit it. "Look here, Father," he began. "I'm not a Christian, granted. But we both worship the same God; and we both grant that He—not we—has control over our lives and our destinies."

"Of course," Father Riley said.

"But He gave us free will, didn't he? And what is free will," Jerry demanded, "but the ability to choose, as

best we can, the path we will follow? Isn't that free will?"

The Jesuit nodded silently.

"Then doesn't it follow that we are to use every ability He gave us to choose the right way to live? Why do you refuse to eat meat on Friday? Why don't I eat pork? For essentially the same reason: We each believe that if we do these things, we can predict what will happen to us in the future: we can expect God's displeasure."

"I won't argue that point either," said Father Riley. He looked at his watch in an involuntary motion of impatience, wondering what Jerry was driving at.

"Some men," Stein said, "have been given more ability than others to predict the future. Look at the Prophets of the Old Testament; they predicted the future because God gave them the ability to do so. And you? *You're a prophet!* Hasn't God given you that gift?"

FATHER RILEY frowned. "I see what you mean, Jerry, but I'm not convinced that God meant me to use it in this way. After all," he said, slyly, "He also gave me the ability to sin."

"That's true," Stein admitted. "But look at it this way: if God had wanted us to know the future—to know it absolutely—would He have given us the evidence the way He has?"

"You said, yourself, that your predictions aren't one hundred percent correct; neither are the predictions of the machine. Even if we use them together, we simply are giving ourselves a chance to get more data about the future. We aren't predicting it in any absolute sense. We know what is *more likely* to happen, perhaps, but we can never be sure we know what *will* happen. That gives us free will, and still allows God's Will."

He drew a deep breath. Father Riley waited, patient now, for the resumption of the argument.

"If you drop a rock, is it a sin to attempt to predict where it will fall? Is it a sin to use accurate instruments to help you predict its fall? And is it a sin if you are right ninety-nine point nine percent of the time? Is it?"

Father Riley smiled. "You have a point there, my son. You would have made a wonderful theologian if you hadn't been tempted off into science."

"Be serious, Father. I think God put you and this machine together at the same place and time for a *purpose*; I think He's trusting us with more data because we've shown Him, in the past eighty years, that we can live together as human beings. I think that decision is up to you." He took a deep breath and mashed out the cigaret. Then he smiled at the priest. "I rest my case," he said.

Father Riley nodded slowly. "You've made a good case of it, too, Jerry," he said. "You're very convincing."

"You'll help us, then? You'll work with the machine?"

"Slowly, my son; one thing at a time. As I said, you're very convincing—but the decision doesn't rest with me. I don't know whether this whole thing has come as a gift from Our Lord or a test of my virtue."

"How could you ever find out? I mean—"

"I know. The answer is that I, alone—Sean Riley—can't find out; I'll need help. The shepherd will have to find the answer from the man who herds *him*. I'll have to present this to my superiors."

He looked at the lieutenant's brown eyes, holding them steadily with his own blue ones. "I wasn't going to say anything about this, Jerry, but you've forced my hand and my conscience. I don't know whether you're cut out to plead the cause of Right or to be the Devil's Advocate in this case; I'm not strong enough to make the decision for myself. I'll have to see the bishop about it right away. I'll present all the evi-

dence to him, and eventually the case will have to go to Rome. I don't know what the decision at the Vatican will be, but—"

**H**E LEFT the sentence hanging there, as he frowned thoughtfully. Now that the decision was out of his hands, he felt at peace for the first time that afternoon—but yet he was still unsatisfied. He knew no real conclusion had been reached.

"Suppose," Jerry said casually. "just suppose that you promised yourself faithfully that you would come down to the lab as soon as you got the final decision and would make some sort of signal at the field where the camera was. That would affect the probability, of course; you don't see anything wrong in doing that, do you?"

"Of course not. But why?"

"Then, suppose we went down right now and looked into the future—to see what the answer will be." He stopped, then. "No, I guess that wouldn't be fair. According to your faith, your Church

is incapable of error. So, if the machine showed two different possibilities—"

"Stop!" Father Riley shouted, springing from his chair. "That's enough, my son! We can test the machine right now!" He looked at Jerry. "Oh, you shrewd one! What an archbishop you could have been!"

"It's simple, too. If the machine gives me an unambiguous answer, then I'll know what to do either way. If the answer is ambiguous, I'll know that the thing is only an illusion. You're right; the Church, in a matter such as this; can not err; there can be only one decision, and that the right one. And if the machine shows two—

"Well, that proves the case, too."

Without bothering to take off his cassock, Father Sean Aloysius Riley, D.D., Ph.D., S.J., grabbed Lieutenant Jerome Stein by the arm and almost dragged him through the door.

"Come on, boy," he said; "we've got a date with tomorrow!"



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"You made me what I am — and  
now you treat me like this?"

# ONE OF THEM?

by ROBERT ABERNATHY

illustrated by Emsk

THE STOREROOM was black dark, a sightless, untenanted wilderness of piled boxes, drums, carboys, and steel pressure-bottles taller than a man. But at its end, a door gave on the workshop; and that great hall was a witches' cavern of smoldering light.

The light was red-hued—most of it, actually, was invisible, infrared, mixed with other knowingly-selected and precisely-metered wavelengths. It seeped upward through the heavy glass of the long banks of breeder vats, glinted back dully red from the jungle above them—pumps, cables, feeding tubes, valves, timers, indicators. A railed catwalk circled the dim cavern over the glowing vats, but no one was there now, no one on the floor below. Hours ago the workers had been herded to their barracks a mile away: the overseers had gone home to their families; and only the automatic machinery was on the job.

He paused in the doorway, with feet braced wide and head held high, with arms and shoulders dragged downward by the wooden box he carried. He was going to have to pass through the light out there in the shop, but it didn't matter. No one could look in from outdoors. The Factory was windowless, its controlled conditions sealed away from all changing weather...

At that thought, his lips skinned back over his teeth. Here, he told himself, *comes a condition They failed to control.*

He stepped heavily out onto the walkway, and trudged along it, awk-

wardly lugging the box before him. Not hurrying any more; a curious confidence had come to him. Since he had got this far, nothing could come between him and his purpose.

Certainly, nobody had cause to visit the Factory at this hour; and he had hit the watchman outside hard enough to put him out for a long time, if not forever.

Besides, he somehow felt that to hurry now would be unseemly, out of keeping with the solemnity of the deed he had come to do.

The catwalk seemed endless, sweeping from shadow to shadow. Beneath his feet, the ranked breeder vats glowed upward, their rounded translucent covers like enormous membranes engorged with blood, inwardly lit with varying luminosities, from staring ruby to smoky garnet. They seemed to pulse with silent heartbeats of light as he walked above them, but that was only imagination.

In the silence beyond his footfalls he heard the quiet labor of the pumps, the faint snick of opening and closing valves, the measured trickle of nutrient fluids.

The vats were a row of great swollen wombs, athrob with growing life. That was no imagination; it was fact. From the fine shadings of their light, a practised eye could gauge the development of the plasm within, estimate closely the time left until it must be discharged from the breeder to undergo its final processing on the reception line in the basement.



AS HE STALKED onward with his burden, he noted mechanically that one of the vats set against the opposite wall was almost dark; only a ghost of red glow lingered. That meant that the contained plasm was virtually mature, the glass womb ready to give birth.

Someone had slipped up badly, there. By time for the morning shift to come on duty, the critical moment would have gone by, the carefully nourished and irradiated fruit would be past-ripe, a total loss...

Not that it mattered, he reminded himself, and his mouth twitched grimly again. Tomorrow morning They would have far more to worry about than one item of spoilage in the Factory's daily output.

The farther end of the shop solidified out of the red gloom; here the walkway terminated in a stage at its own level. Bins along the wall held small tools and replacement parts, and workers' smocks hung from a row of hooks. On his right, steps led down to the floor level, and a door opened blackly on what he knew to be a locker room.

With great care he set the wooden box down, close by the wall. He glanced upward, gauging distance, and slid the case gently a few inches along the floor so it was directly below the black-painted steel switchbox bolted to the wall near the ceiling.

He straightened, flexing stiff muscles. But this was the easy part. The hard steps—so hard there had been several moments when he almost despaired of carrying out his plan—had been getting over the high fence, stalking the watchman; then—fearful every second of being seen by a chance passerby, or stumbling on some alarm—opening outer gate and storeroom door and staggering painfully inside with double the load he'd just set down.

Now it remained only to return to the storeroom for the other box he'd deposited there. He would bring the



wires and batteries, too, this trip, and everything would be set.

(In a dark corner of the Factory yard, the watchman stirred, groaned, and rolled over. The blow had come close to fracturing his skull—but he was hard-headed and thick-necked, and he was already beginning to grope his way back to consciousness.)

HE CAST one more glance at the switchbox overhead. It was locked and armored, tamperproof— They'd taken that much precaution, even though They hadn't got into the Factory at all... And why should they have foreseen? That would have meant that They understood a great deal which, very plainly, only this night's work could make Them understand.

When the dynamite went off it would, he thought, rip through the whole ground floor. The breeder vats would burst open, spilling their plasmata into the chaos of smashed equipment and glass shards. Even if not all the vats were shattered, he had made sure of a thorough job by planting the charge squarely beneath the main switchbox. All the red lights would be quenched; the heating elements would cool; the nutrient baths would cease to circulate. And the wall right here would no doubt be blown outward, letting in the cold night out there, to finish it.

At the very least, it would be a long time before repairs could be made and the continuous process of manufacture recommenced. Perhaps—he hoped—They would see the point, and the Factory would never be rebuilt.

He strode firmly out onto the catwalk, going back for the second box.

Three steps—and from behind him, shocking as a gunshot from ambush, the sound of an indrawn breath.

He whirled, already despairing. The watchman he'd slugged should have been the only one; he *knew* that no guard was left inside the building at

night. But, just within the door that led to the locker room, at floor level, someone stood gazing at him pointblank.

Even in the first numb instant it struck him as strange that Their guard should be a young woman. A frightened young woman. She was frozen in shrinking back—one hand defensively lifted, palm outward and empty, but the other clenched at her side, concealing something.

If only he'd had the exploder already connected... of if he'd been close enough to grab her before she could trip an alarm... Sickeningly he knew it was too late.

"Well?" he rasped, voice loud and strange in his own ears. "Get it over with! What have you got there—a gun? a signal gadget? Go ahead!"

SHE didn't speak. Her eyes were wide, dark, unreadable in the murky light. Her clenched hand rose and slowly opened, letting what it held slip to the floor at her feet. A damp, crumpled handkerchief.

Now he saw, even in the red dimness, that the girl's face was streaked by tears.

He said stupidly, "Then... you aren't one of Them?"

"Y-y-you—" she stammered, and halted. She gulped a breath, and recovered herself with surprising swiftness. "I thought *you* were one; I thought you were the watchman... I hid when I heard you coming in, but the echoes fooled me into thinking you'd gone out again; I hoped you'd left the storeroom door open."

His heart's pounding gradually slackened. He nodded brusquely. "Yes... I get it now. Come on, I locked the door after me, but I'll open it for you."

She gave him an uneasy, questioning look, but turned to mount the steps and come out onto the catwalk. If she hadn't startled him so, he would have noticed at first that she wore the plain durable clothing of a Factory worker, one of his own kind. Her taking him

for one of the others was the more pardonable, since he was dressed like a lower-class city dweller, in the garb that had served him as passport and disguise during his months of skulking freedom.

He said gruffly, "When I worked here myself, I thought of trying a break the same way—hiding out in the storeroom, in an empty crate maybe, till everybody left, and hoping they wouldn't check the barracks too soon... But I played it smart, and studied the locks here first. They're electric; an ordinary impression won't work. The key's got to be just the right alloy, too. So you got locked in."

"That's what happened," she admitted quietly. Close to him now, she had a look of fragile beauty, and the mark of tears was plain to see. But he had to admire her restored composure. She'd been trapped here, alone in the red light and the shadows, for all of six hours, expecting only to be discovered and punished in the morning; and her nerve wasn't broken.

*We're a tough breed*, he thought, and as quickly suppressed the treacherous warmth of pride.

"Come along," he said, and turned again toward the storeroom. Her footsteps echoed behind him as he strode unburiedly along the walk.

SHE SAID wonderingly, "You must have broken in. You've been on the outside... living among Them, passing as one of Them? How long?"

"Eight months. I made my getaway from the farm labor battalion where I got sent for punching a guard here." He sensed the additional questions that must be seething in her mind, but there was nothing to be gained by wasting time in explaining his purpose here. So much he did owe her—to give what little help he could. "I'll give you a couple of names—contacts you can use, if you make it into the city. There's a sort of loose-jointed organization."

"Others of—our people?"

"Yes. Some other fugitives that made it; and even a few of Them, that you can trust, up to a point. Sympathizers. They feel *sorry* for us." He spat the word.

They neared the storeroom door. He stepped through into the thick darkness, slipped his flashlight from his pocket and snapped it on.

The girl said with springing hope in her voice, "Others have managed it... to make a life out there. You did; I can too!"

(Out in the yard, the watchman rose up on hands and knees and shook his dizzy head. He had as yet not got to the stage of wondering coherently what had hit him; but he staggered mechanically to his feet, going on blind animal vitality.)

"If you want to call it a life," he said bleakly. "You've got to keep your head down, all the time. Avoid attracting attention; don't go anywhere. They ask questions; hide, keep hiding. You won't find it easy, even if you you're lucky and don't get caught right away and set scrubbing floors or something."

In the darkness, cut by the flashlight beam ahead, she was close beside him, brushed warm against him. He heard and felt her catch her breath as the realization struck her of something strangely amiss in his actions. "But... won't you be coming with me... show me the way, help me, anyway until..."

"I've got a job to finish here."

She stopped stockstill beside the outer door. "A job... *what do you mean?*"

Her tone said that she had already half-guessed. He hesitated, conscious now of an urge to share the tremendous moment.

He said flatly. "As soon as you're on your way, I'm going to blow the Factory to hell. I've got enough stolen dynamite here to do it."

Turning, he could see her dimly against the glow from the workshop doorway. Could hear her quickened breathing. "But... *why?*"

"You know why."

"No," she said stifledly. "It's a terrible thing. You've no right."

"WHO HAS a better right?" he demanded in a voice that was suddenly raw and quivering. "But you ought to understand; your right's every bit as good as mine. You aren't human, either, you came out of this very Factory, just like I did, with no father, no mother, born of a test-tube and a breeder-val."

"Yes, yes," she whispered. "But—"

"Don't you see? It's got to be done. If it isn't, They'll go on and on. They'll build other Factories— They've got big plans, the humans. But maybe this will jar Their smugness enough so They'll give it up for a bad job. Maybe after this there'll never be any more of us... no more people stamped IMITATION and despised and hated and herded like animals to do the dirtiest work... no more *androids*." He used the ugly word deliberately, savoring its supreme bitterness, seeing the girl flinch—feeling, as she seemed stricken silent, a queer guilty pang that he deliberately put aside unexamined.

He wheeled abruptly and, fumbling with key and flashlight, unlocked the massive outer door. It swung ajar, and cold air breathed inward. He almost fancied he could hear, from the red-lit shop, the click of relays boosting the current through the heating coils, compensating for a temperature drop inside the Factory, protecting the valuable cultures and growing plasmata.

"Go on," he grunted. "The farther you get before it blows, the more chance you'll have. They'll blanket the area, search..."

He could feel her peering at him, with cautious flicks of the light—he was taking a chance now that someone might notice that door ajar, and there was no more time to waste—locating the other wooden box, the homemade rig of batteries and insulated wiring, where he'd left them in the storehouse

clutter. "I've handled explosives before, outside, and I've got a hundred feet of wire to the exploder. But *you'd* better get out of here."

"I can't let you do it." But the shaking of her voice told him what he wanted to know; deep down, her instincts had taught her what his had taught him—that the cursed unbegotten race to which they both belonged could hope for no better destiny than to perish with its curse.

She, too, had it all in her background—the humiliation; the slavery; the rancid resentments that grew into a quaking helpless hatred of Them who stood over you, aloof and uncaring, gods and torturers, the more hateful in that it seemed They had done it all without passion...

She wouldn't try to give the alarm, wouldn't betray him.

He stooped, hefted the heavy box and the detonating equipment, stalked slowly once again toward the red-lit doorway.

In the doorway she grasped at his arm. "Wait—listen to me—"

"Watch out!" he snapped. "Don't make me drop this."

Her hand fell away. But he knew she was following as he trod the walkway again, through the quiet, warm, interminable crimson twilight.

Let her do as she liked now; he'd done what he could.

(The watchman, still dazed, had wandered around a half-circuit of the building before he realized confusedly that there was something he must attend to—and at the same time grasped the significance of the partly-open door he saw. He gulped the cold night air and, reviving, stumbled toward the telephone box beside the fence.)

"LISTEN TO me, please." She sounded half-breathless, but it was plain she'd been frantically preparing a reasoned speech. "You think you have to do this, because you hate Them so.



You think They're all evil. They aren't really...but, I know, that's no argument. Most of the time I can't help hating Them, too. But you're letting it blind you, so you don't see that destroying the Factory won't hurt Them at all; only us. So long as the Factory still runs, there are more and more of us every day, and sooner or later—"

"More and more—for Them to despise, to be told what we are, to suffer with knowing what we are!" He plodded stiffly ahead. "Monsters...soulless things...profane imitations of Man...manufactured objects!"

"I know some of Them call us all those names—but not all of Them. Don't you know there are others that take our part? I've read all the books I could find in the barracks library, about the—android question. It *is* a question for Them, you know. The reason we're treated as we are—it's simply because we're a new creation; They don't know yet what to do about us. I've read some of the speeches made in Their highest assemblies—pleading for us! Brave speeches..."

"And you're grateful to Them for a few brave words, and for letting you read books about your betters?" They were approaching the landing at the end of the catwalk. "Why do you want to get away from Them, then?"

"I don't."

Shocked, he halted and swung round, so abruptly that she bumped into the box he carried, and bit her lip with pain. "What's that?"

"I say I *don't* want to get away." Having caught his attention, she hurried on. "I want to go out and mix with Them, be like one of Them. That's the way to hurry the time when we'll be Their openly admitted equals. Not blowing up the Factory! You'll only set us back by years. Our enemies will say, 'See?' Just as we said—they're dangerous, Frankenstein monsters!"

"Fine!" he said shortly. "Then maybe They'll quit making monsters."

"You've been outside. Tell me, then—is it true?...that some of the escaped ones have had children—*borne* children?"

He looked away. "That's so. They're fools. What'll happen when they're caught? Poor kids, finding out that Papa and Mama are really run-away Factory goods—"

"*Look at me!*" she commanded in a low, fierce voice.

**H**E LOOKED. Her eyes were dark and intense upon him in the light of the red witches' den, light streaming up from beneath their feet... She was slight, fine-boned, but graciously formed. She was burningly alive, and beautiful.

"I can have children. And children's children, generations of descendants. Yours, maybe. We can go on, with or without the Factory. So in that way it doesn't matter, now—certainly it's not worth destroying ourselves to destroy it. Let's get away while there's still time..."

He shut his eyes briefly. "Go on... in Their world?"

Her shoulders sagged; she went on regarding him, but dully and without expression.

He turned resolutely away, stepped onto the stage beneath the switchbox. He bent to set the second box down carefully beside the first; knelt over them, and with a screwdriver from his belt began ripping away the lightly stapled boards over the dynamite.

He growled, "Leave me alone. I've got a job to do. Maybe it's a dirty one, but—I'm an android. I was *made* to do dirty jobs."

The sticks of explosive were neatly packed in rows, detonator caps gleaming dully as he uncovered them. Fixing the primers in advance was a risk he'd felt he had to take, not knowing how much he might be hurried in the last minutes. He flung the boards aside, fumbled for the ends of wire,

not looking at the girl again but knowing she still stood watching him.

(The watchman babbled into the telephone. The man on the other end of the line said irritably, "What? What about the Factory? Speak up, will you... *Huh?*... Hold on. Hold everything! I'll have help on the way in a few minutes...")

She gazed speechlessly in the red gloom as he worked speedily but with care, whittling wire-ends bright with a pocket-knife, wiring the dynamite.

"You seem to have thought of all the answers," she said stifledly. "So no doubt you know this one... *Why did They make us?*"

His hands froze momentarily with the blade and the wires. "All right; you're going to tell me what you think *you* know. Go ahead."

"No... I don't know. I doubt that They really know why, either. We haven't profited Them—economically or any other way. We've been a costly experiment, and a lot of Them feel just like you do, would like to see it dropped and forgotten about. Their society's been torn apart in disputes over us... But, if the books tell the truth, They worked and studied and tried for generations...and dreamed for more generations before that...to discover the secret of life. It looks as if there were something in Their makeup that compelled Them to do it, wouldn't let Them rest until They'd created us."

HE GLANCED up at last, but she'd turned half away and was looking out over the glowing ranks of the breeders, the pregnant glass wombs redly throbbing with strange light and life. Her voice trailed into a silence underscored by the impalpable susurris of the pumps.

His fingers finished joining the wires that meant death, twisting them hard and viciously into sure contact. He said harshly, "I can tell you what that 'something' is, in Them. It's the need

They have for somebody, anybody, to hate and scorn and despise—somebody to feel superior to... They need that so badly, They'll even make what They need."

She sighed, and said surprisingly, "I suppose you're right; certainly Their histories tell a story... But there's one thing I wonder if your theory explains; why did They make us in Their own image? The scientists, the ones that really created us—they swear, in their writings, in testimony before the legislators and so on, that there really *isn't* any difference; we're perfect likenesses of Them. As if They didn't dare change anything..."

"Of course; that's why you understand Their minds' workings so well. Because we're exactly like Them, the same feelings, the same thoughts—"

"No!" he burst out. He rose erect, tangling the wires he'd been starting to unroll. "That's a lie you got from Their books! We may be like Them in body—" He'd been shaken more than he dared admit by her words, the steady conviction that—be it ever so false—has the quality of sounding like the truth. Now fresh anger boiled up to strengthen him. He raged: "—But in mind, in feelings, there's no common ground. That's why we can't ever be like Them, and They'll never accept us; they don't feel like we do! We're made able to suffer, because They like to see suffering! We're made so that we writhe under contempt, because They enjoy being contemptuous! They—They—"

She listened and didn't try to answer. He clenched his teeth, fought back the trembling of his fingers and struggled with the snarled loops of wire, already fastened at their farther end to the homemade exploder.

But just as the wires came free, she spoke again. In a wholly altered voice—a sort of mournful chant, plainly the tone of one reciting a well-memorized text.

"*Is it good unto thee that thou*

*shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands...?"*

HE PAUSED for a moment, staring at her with brows downdrawn. He wondered fleetingly if she'd gone mad. She took a deep breath.

*"Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me."*

*"Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?"*

"Did you make that up?" he demanded sharply.

She shook her head. *"Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life—"*

The recitative was weirdly arresting, in the hazy red-shadowed void of the Factory, beside the dynamite boxes. The great vats brooded glowing near and far in their many shades of red; and for some reason he noticed again the one that was dark, in sign that it was come to its time.

The girl's eyes were dark and wild upon him and the queer, archaic words seemed to strike at poignant personal meanings. But as she paused for breath he broke in, shattering the near-hypnotic spell...shattering it, though, only at the risk of letting the meanings behind the words penetrate and grow real...

"What's that? Poetry? If you didn't make it up, who did?"

"It's a sort of poem," she acknowledged. "Something I found in one of the books—an old book, thousands of years old. One of Their books, of course. I don't suppose anybody knows who wrote the poem, except that he was a Jew—one of the kinds of people They once singled out for that hate of Theirs... It's about a man called Job."

"A man?" he asked stupidly.

"Job is complaining bitterly to the

God who, he believes, created him in His own image; saying, 'You made me what I am, and now you treat me like this? You had no right to do it!' And he goes on and says:

*"Thou huntest me as a fierce lion... Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!"*

*"I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave."*

"Yes," he muttered, "that's it... But... a man? One of Them?"

He was looking very closely into her intent eyes, only vaguely aware that she had taken his clenched hand in hers and was gently trying to loosen his fingers' grip on the deadly wires. "You're not trying to fool me?" he asked.

"I'm trying to make you see the truth. That They can be unhappy, too...weak and afraid and desperate and bitter to the point of rebellion, of wanting to die—because that's the only way you can rebel against somebody that's far above you... But They're not above us; They're only beside us. In the end, They'll realize that, and we will, too; and it won't make any difference whether a person's born or made. That's what those lines told me the first time I read them; that's why I remembered them now.

"Do you understand? Once we know that—we don't have to commit suicide, as individuals or as a race. We can fight Them—when we have to—as equals; and we can live at peace with Them as equals afterward, when the battle's won. Perhaps you and I can do more than most of our people, if we can go among Them, work among Them unnoticed..."

SLOWLY he raised his hand, stared dumbly at the trailing wires it clutched. He let them fall.

She grasped both his hands and tugged at him in sudden anxious im-

patience; her eyes were alight though her mouth was unsmiling. "Come, let's hurry; let's get away..."

(Cars rolled up, quietly, without lights, alongside the outer fence. Men slipped warily through the open gate into the Factory yard. Men in uniform with shiny boots and belts, some with drawn guns. But they waited, hugging the fence, glancing with impatience out to the highway and with suspicion at the partly-open store-room door... Finally another car pulled up beside the others, and two more men got out; a gaunt elderly man, as neatly dressed as if it were noon and a shorter one with sandy hair and thick glasses, wearing a topcoat flung on over striped pajamas. The police parted to let them through, and they conferred tersely in the lee of the building.)

They'd gone half the length of the workshop—he moving beside her like a sleepwalker—when he stopped short, closing a hand upon her arm. "Wait. There's still—something's got to be done here."

She gave him a quick, scared glance. "No, not that—not any more. But look—over there."

She looked, saw the breeder which gloomed darkly across the way; among its glowing companions, its inner light guttering out into the darkness of ripeness and frustrated parturience.

He said jerkily, "One of us; one more! But he, or she, won't live—or will be deformed, a monster, if nothing's done before morning. We should have plenty of time—"

"Yes, of course," she breathed.

"Do you know the reception procedure on the basement line? I can handle all the steps on this level; I've done it lots of times... All right. You go down there. After discharge is completed, you can signal if you need help to put him—it—into suspension so it'll be all right till morning."

She nodded again, hurried off into the red haze as he made his way toward the breeder.

A light flashed on presently among the jumble of controls, signaling her presence on the level beneath.

HE OPENED the first valve, and a hidden gurgling began as the nutrient bath started to drain away. Deftly, summoning up old skills as they were needed, he made fine adjustments of current and radiation; he waited, counting seconds without haste, to snap the right switches at the right moments.

Heavy footsteps rang and echoed in the windowless cavern. He glanced up, briefly, glimpsing the men, the uniforms, the guns. Then he saw that a temperature gauge was creeping dangerously downward, and his hand shot out automatically to twist a vernier. The expiring ruby glow in the depths of the great glass womb grew brighter. Murkily seen, down there, something stirred, flexing spasmodically in the first voluntary exercise of muscles, protesting feebly against the increasing breakdown of its cozy little world...

He sensed Them closing round him. felt the catwalk shake Their tread.

"Don't disturb him now! Stand clear!" It was a shrill voice, not very authoritative, belonging to the man who wore his topcoat over his pajamas. But the police drew back and made way. The sandy-haired man came near, peered through his glasses at the instrument settings, noted the signal light. "He's got a helper down in the basement... No! Don't go down there yet! This is a delicate process they're carrying out; if anything should go wrong at this stage..." In response to a gruff query he said grudgingly: "About ten minutes more."

...He heard Their talk with only half an ear; all his mind was concentrated on precision, on making the intuitive right decisions of the trained operator. And They spoke rather hush-



edly now, as They stood unmoving or fidgeted, watching with faces that looked pale in the red twilight.

"Well, it must have been one of 'em slugged the watchman."

"I don't get it, though; you can see, it works here. So it busts in in the middle of the night to put in some overtime? That's a hell of a way to buck for a transfer to the coal mines."

"Shdup! You want to make him foul up now? Got any idea how much one of them things *costs*?"

"Hey, look at this!"

"Good God. Don't touch it; put in a call for the bomb squad."

"Doctor, I intend to insist on a thorough psychological investigation of this case. And—I think the results ought to be published."

"Published? First of all, we've got to decide how to present this incident to the Committee."

"The Committee be damned!"

"Unfortunately; we can't..."

The preparatory steps were all finished. He pressed a button twice, and saw, by the blink of the signal light, that she was still standing by below.

With a careful and steady hand, he began easing over the lever which launched the newly-created one on the beginning of its perilous path into life.

The two of them were hustled out of the Factory separately, out into the cold night air, blinking at the spotlights that blazed now from the waiting patrol cars.

Yet there was a moment when they passed near enough that he was able to call hastily, "How— Was it—"

And she could answer quickly, head held high between the guards: "He was perfect."

Then they were hurried apart.



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## EDITOR'S CHOICE

A READER who writes in to approve occasional discussions of editors and editorial problems, says, in part, "...I realize that the editor is also a reader and is the author's first reader as you have said, so that the author has to satisfy the editor before he can hope to please a larger audience. But shouldn't an editor be more than just a reader, even allowing for the fact that he probably reads more science fiction than anyone else? Shouldn't he accept or reject stories with an eye to what his readership likes, rather than what he likes himself? Don't you sometimes accept stories that you didn't care for so much as a reader, and also return some stories you liked a lot?"

Assuredly, the editor has to be more than just a reader picking out stories he likes, or reading manuscripts the way he would read the stories in a rival publication. Many science fictionists read only stories by authors they like—and perhaps will try one by a name they've never seen before; others start every story but continue reading only if the tale captures their interest early, and holds it. I consider it my duty to keep up with those magazines I consider our chief competition—magazines where the editor's intent is to present as high quality science fiction as he can obtain. (Thought-provoking, well-written, well-plotted, well-characterized, well-motivated, etc.) This means reading every story carefully from beginning to end, and *most* of the non-fiction if not all of it; it necessarily includes a certain number of stories that I would not bother to finish otherwise.

Whether the other editors do the same, I do not know; some may not consider it necessary, and perhaps might be able to offer convincing reasons why. I do think it necessary for three reasons (a) it broadens my own ideas as to what is and what is not good science fiction, and sometimes enables me to define my own standards more

clearly—sometimes provoking a re-examination of them; (b) it keeps me in touch with what is being done currently, and as a by-product what is being overdone—the matter of many stories on the same subject and theme appearing within a limited period has been often noted; (c) it aids in contacting newcomers of promise—if a manuscript comes in from a new name, the knowledge of what he has already published can be helpful in making suggestions if the particular story does not strike me as quite right.

Now my intent is to publish as good examples of what I consider quality science fiction as I can obtain. This you can call editorial policy, and it is firm in some respects—but I also believe in elasticity within it. There's such a thing as fencing yourself so tightly within a given policy that you cannot see where a particular story—which apparently does not conform—is one which should be accepted because it actually fills the requirements in a different way. Sometimes an editor errs on this type of acceptance—but the editor who plays it safe, and permits no infraction or evasion of rigid policy-rules, eventually will be editing a static and dead magazine, even while he avoids serious lapses of judgement in what he does accept. I've been roundly drubbed—and sometimes rightly so—for boners; but I think that the type of outlook which permitted sin also resulted in more stories that brought forth hearty praise.

WHAT DO the readers want? Well, to a certain extent the reader's desires can be conditioned by an editor—but not completely so. If policy requires this and that and the other, with "and it has to be a good story, of course" tagged on as a rider, the editor may be able to plug his "line"—or "current line"—successfully if he's able to get enough first-rate writers to follow

the leader. The trouble comes when writers, who are often quick to catch on to such things, start selling him the "line" instead of stories—when he begins to develop myopia to the fact that he's publishing a lot of routine narratives virtuously grafted on to the required formulae.

I assume that "good story" comes first, and any fundamental "line" is merely something that can help to make it "good". Whether any given example you point to is a "good story" will always be moot point. I hope. Someone has noted that the old saw that you can't argue about taste is wrong: Personal taste is one of the few things one can argue about, because facts are inarguable—while opinions are subject to variation if the individual is willing to be convinced.

I assume, also, that the readers want quality science fiction, rather than juveniles or sheer action-adventure tales. This does not mean that the action-adventure story is banned but rather that, where used, the action-adventure plot should be hung upon a novel science-fiction idea, or new twist upon same—and I must be convinced that this was the best way to handle the idea. (Or find the story so fascinating, as the author presented it, that I'm willing to waive the question of how it might have been handled otherwise.)

Reading the editorials and letter departments in the other magazines, and commentaries to be found in the most literate fan journals—as well as talking with readers where possible—augments the letters I receive, in helping to determine what the readers want. The data is necessarily incomplete—but some information is better than working in complete darkness, secure in the conviction that I *know* all the answers and that my only task is to convert the rest of the world.

Another assumption is that *all* the readers—actual and potential—have not read science fiction as long or as assiduously as I have. Thus I try to select stories that will be comprehensible, as stories, to persons who have never read science fiction at all (but who are capable of enjoying it once they read it), or who have read very little science fiction. This means not only handling technical matters so that they won't sound like specialists' tracts, but also being careful about science fiction's general vocab-

ulary—terms and phrases which are a sort of shorthand to the experienced reader, but irritatingly meaningless to the newcomer.

**S**HOULD AN editor sometimes accept stories he doesn't care for so much, and/or reject stories he likes? The answer to both parts of the question is: Under certain circumstances, yes. For example, I do not care (as I've noted before) for most of Ray Bradbury's science fiction. This dislike rests upon two grounds, (a) I cannot accept most of it as science fiction at all, because of the ignoring of science and the contempt for science that they display—or call it scientiphobia, if you like (b) I dislike the sentimentality.

As a reader, this keeps me from reading Bradbury very much; however, I've read enough of his work to recognize without qualification that Ray Bradbury is a very fine craftsman and that he can write a story with a great deal of emotional impact, regardless of whether I like the emotion he plugs. I've read enough letters from science fiction readers to realize that Bradbury is very popular with a sizeable number of them. Thus, as an editor, were I to receive a story from Bradbury which was not anti-science fiction, and which displayed the craftsmanship I know to be excellent, I would take it whether or not I cared for the sentiments and emotions therein, believing that the readers wanted it. ("The readers", of course, cannot ever—well, hardly ever—mean "all the readers"; usually it means a sizeable number, enough to consider.)

This principle applies to any other story, by any other author, which is recognizable as a quality work—irrespective of my own liking in the matter. Of course, there's always the possibility that such a story won't go over; on such occasions, the editor wails and gnashes his teeth. Right or wrong, this principle can't be invoked very often, simply because an editor cannot keep his job, health, and/or psychic stability if he operates on the assumption that a story that really revolts him is obviously first class, and just what the readers want.)

There are numerous reasons for an editor declining stories he likes, but such ones as questions of length, wrong type of story for the magazine, budget, overstock, etc., are beside the point. Only stories which the

(Turn To Page 48)

# THE BIG HUSH

Novelet

by IRVING E. COX, JR.

*illustrated by Orban*

The sympathizers wanted a free world, where the rights of the individual were respected, where consumer goods were abundant—But Dr. Dodd knew that abundance couldn't come simply through a change in government. Not when the population was too large to support with present agriculture, and most resources had long been consumed.

**D**R. DODD had the fragments of the old books a long time before he made up his mind. He thought the most likely place to contact a sympathizer group was in the entertainment district of the city. Other than that, he wasn't quite sure how to go about it. You couldn't just go up to a stranger and ask if he were a sympathizer.

As it turned out, any planning on the professor's part was unnecessary. In the first bar he visited, an attractive girl joined him at his table. "Good evening, Dr. Dodd," she said throatily.

"You know my name?"

"And why you're here."

This could be a trap; she might be an agent of the committee. He had no way of being sure, and the agents were everywhere. "I don't know what you're talking about," he answered cautiously.

"We've had our eye on you for a long time, Dr. Dodd. You see, we arranged for you to find those old books."

He forced himself to relax. If she knew that much, it didn't matter. The books alone were sufficient ground for an agent to order his arrest. "You're a sympathizer?"

"I make the initial contacts for the local organization; the name I use is Neva Tupper."

"I can't say much for your methods." Dodd managed to force a smile. "The number of arrests reported in the papers—"

"Never our people, Dr. Dodd,"

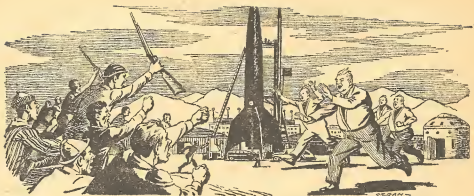
"All right," he admitted; "I'm interested. But first I want to know what you sympathizers really stand for."

"A free world, professor, where the rights of the individual are respected, where consumer goods are abundant and—" She broke off, because the usual patter was not what Dodd wanted to hear.

"Miss Tupper," he said, "you don't get that simply by tearing the present government apart. The rationing of food and power is necessary; we have a larger population than we can support with our present agriculture. In the past, we consumed most of our resources; it is vital to conserve what is left."

"It comes to the same thing, Dr. Dodd. If we're going to have better distribution, we have to change the way Central is run."

"Do we need Central at all? You say you know about the books I found. They aren't intact, and sometimes the lack of a complete context makes the reading difficult. But I've formed one or two generalizations that seem sig-



nificant. For example, did you know that before Central was set up—in the old days when scientists and teachers were still first-class citizens—we patented sometimes as many as forty thousand new ideas in a single year? All of us in Central don't do one percent of that number now."

"Central is organized for the popular welfare, Dr. Dodd. When scientists worked independently, much of the research was very harmful."

**"HOW DOES** a fact do harm? It exists; it's true; it's neither good nor bad. It seems to me, Miss Tupper, that your group is not clear in its own thinking. If you merely want to plunder our stock of consumer goods, count me out."

"Of course not, Dr. Dodd. We've never had an opportunity to consider the point of view of a professor; it should be quite interesting to the others. And we must be fair; we can't overlook the real achievements of the Central Project. We have space flight now, and we couldn't have had it under the old system."

"One accomplishment in a century of research! We send a handful of expensive ships careening all over the universe; yet all the brains in Central haven't made a single contribution toward the solution of our real problem—overpopulation and dwindling resources."

"Eventually we'll find a new world

where men can migrate, and that will solve the problem."

"How can we be sure of that?" After a moment he added, "How do we know it hasn't been found already? The committee publishes what it chooses; the rest is kept secret—they say, for security reasons. If we could reduce the population, the need for the regimentation would be gone. The committee wouldn't like that; its power would be gone, too."

"Our organization is a small part of a large, national movement, Dr. Dodd; the local groups are united in one great dream—freedom for all people."

The pious words were wasted. The professor replied dryly, "Freedom to think, but not freedom from responsibility. We have that now, and the price we pay is—" He smiled crookedly as he quoted the old diatribe, "'A burlesque of greatness spewed up by the shallow slag of small minds.'"

Before the girl left the bar, she told Dodd where the sympathizers held their meetings—in a small, suburban church—and she asked him to join them the following evening. He sat watching her as she disappeared in the crowd.

And he found himself wondering about Neva Tupper. Was she typical of the other sympathizers? It wasn't much to build into a revolution. She seemed shallow and superficial; perhaps it was the way she dressed—the cheap jewelry and the heavy make-up



of the streetwalker. Something about Neva Tupper didn't ring true; the real woman was concealed by a careful pose. Dodd had a vague feeling that she couldn't be trusted, and that frightened him.

Far away, a city clock chimed ten; Dodd paid his bill and left the bar in haste. Eleven o'clock was the curfew hour for professors and teachers, and it was a long walk back to the Central Project.

There were no automobiles on the city streets. Except for officials of the committee and committee agents, no citizen had driven an automobile for nearly a century. A broad, express highway ran from the city to the Central Project. Paralleling it was a fenced walk which the professor followed. Occasionally a car shot along the highway. When Dodd was still half a mile from the compound gate, a red convertible hummed past him, coming from the direction of the city.

He recognized the driver—Sara Rupert, whose father was co-chairman of the committee. She was a girl in her twenties, arrogant and haughty. She supervised the lab building where Dodd worked, and, since she was the only person related to the committee whom he knew by name, she had come to symbolize the oligarchy that he hated.

**A**LL COMMITTEE members lived in the compound of the Central Project. In everything but name, committee headquarters was the government, although popularly-elected representatives and a president still met in Washington and went through the motions of law-making. Yet, no man could serve in the government without a committee clearance; and his tenure of office lasted just as long as the committee discovered no sympathizer tendencies in his behavior.

The committee membership was independently self-perpetuating. In the last generation it had become heredi-

tary, a ruling oligarchy with all the power of absolute government and none of the responsibility—for popular resentment could always be directed against the puppets in Washington.

Reduced to its essential form, Dodd knew, it was government by fear. Fear of an enemy ceaselessly plotting to steal national secrets, and fear of those nameless citizens who sympathized with the enemy. Arrests of sympathizers were reported with monotonous regularity in the daily newspapers, but no man knew any longer precisely what a sympathizer was. The enemy, as a definable entity, had not existed for decades; but the fear flourished and hung like a weight on every man's mind.

It was a part of the legend that professors and teachers were prone to sympathizer tendencies; therefore the committee had reduced them, as a group, to the status of second-class citizens. The committee had set up the Central Project, where all research of any nature was conducted under the supervision of the committee itself. Since a scientist became what he was through training, the Central Project had eventually controlled education as well. For the last twenty years, all university graduate work had been given only in the compound. It was a capital offense for a citizen to practice as a teacher unless he had committee clearance.

2



**A**T THREE minutes of eleven, Dodd rang the bell at the Project gate; floodlights came on, and the gate swung open. In the guard room Dodd dropped limply on a chair beside the Sergeant's desk, panting for breath.

To reach the gate before curfew, he had run the last five hundred yards. "I was afraid I wouldn't make it. Frank," he gasped.

"You'd better schedule your time more carefully, Professor." The Sergeant checked Dodd's name off a list on a clipboard hung over his desk. "You're the last one in tonight; I can go off duty now."

"You were waiting, Frank, just because I—"

"I had work to do," the Sergeant said gruffly.

Naturally he would say that, Dodd realized; the Sergeant couldn't admit—perhaps not even to himself—that he would have checked Dodd in, even after the curfew hour was passed. The two had been friends for years, as much so as a teacher and a committee agent could ever become friends.

"Have you made up your mind yet, Frank?" Dodd asked. "About enrolling in the space school?"

"I'm not going to do it, Dodd."

"Why not, man? You're young. You have the build of an ox. I don't know—you might even have brains, if you had a chance to use them; that's all a man needs to pioneer a new frontier. Our world is caught in a trap, Frank; we're slowly choking ourselves with too many people and too few raw materials. You're the kind we need to save us."

"Miss Rupert says my work here is more important."

"Sara Rupert? What's she got to do with it?"

"She came back from the city a few minutes ago, and when I mentioned it to her—"

"So they'd rather keep you here, playing watchdog on a prison camp!"

"You mean—" The Sergeant was shocked. "By that you mean the Project compound?"

"Put it down in my dossier, Frank,

by all means. Do your mean, little job; forget the stars." Dodd turned away, bitterly whispering a quote from the old diatribe, "The cringing paralysis of the big hush."

The professor crossed the lawn toward the building where the teachers were assigned small, crowded living quarters. No light showed through the windows. Dodd's colleagues would be in bed and asleep. There was never any entertaining, never any informal visiting back and forth among the scientists. The prying microphones, lurking everywhere, effectively kept a damper on social activity.

EVERY WORD spoken within the Project compound was tape recorded. At the end of the day, the tapes were sorted by a corporal in command of each Project building. The Sergeant's office received items which the corporals classified as suspicious. The Sergeant then re-sorted the data and sent what he considered significant on to the committee. So far as Dodd knew, the constant threat of a sympathizer hearing had never been carried out; the fact that the recordings were made had been enough to keep the scientists from indiscretion.

The restraints of the compound would have been unendurable if the committee had not provided a safety valve; no one was confined to the Project by the curfew hour. They accepted the regimentation because the committee had left them that one small illusion of personal liberty.

Dodd paused on the steps and looked back toward the gate; the Sergeant was leaving the guard room. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man, in the prime of life and good health. The sort of man who should have been anxious to explore the new frontier in the sky—if the committee had not conditioned him to slavish obedience.

Dodd considered the Sergeant an ac-

curate index to the thinking of the average man. If the Sergeant rejected the new world with so little protest, the mass of people would do the same. Dodd thought of the outlawed books again. "*The cringing paralysis—the big hush.*" Was this, then, the final curtain on the magnificent greatness of man?

In his apartment, Dodd switched on the desk lamp and took the prohibited fragments of the old books out of hiding. *How the passage of time distorts values!*, he thought. This treasure of his, these yellowed pages which it was a capital offense to read—what were they really but the trash of another century? A chapter or two from the biography of an obscure mathematician; pages from political essays written by scientists; scraps of fiction.

None of it offered information that Dodd did not already know; the crime was a difference in viewpoint. In Dodd's world, the scientists were held to be employees of the state; as such, they had no right to private opinions.

*How did we get into this fix?* Dodd had often asked himself that question. History gave him part of the answer. The rest was the subtle change in the popular mind, the slow transition by which people abrogated their right of individual judgment—the issues of conscience—and allowed a self-appointed committee to shoulder that personal responsibility for them.

In the beginning, the committee had been delegated only to weed out actual enemy agents; at the time, the threat of atomic war had cast a long shadow everywhere—popular judgment had to be sound, or disaster was inevitable. The average man wearied of walking a tight rope; he was happy to let the committee do his thinking for him.

*How had it happened?* At a snail's pace, over many years, a slow dissolution of individual responsibility into this crushing regimentation. *How had it happened?* Not because a band of

strong men had seized power, but because the mass of average men had deliberately elected to give it up. *How had it happened?* Once, the teachers might have prevented it, if they had not bogged down in an intellectual timidity peculiarly their own—the fiction that controversial issues should not be discussed in a classroom. To one minority group or another, every issue was controversial; and, bending with every whisper of criticism, the professional educators had nothing left to teach.

DODD WORKED a good part of the night assembling notes for what he would say when he met Neva Tupper's sympathizers the next evening. He was pleased with the result. All the following day, while he frittered away his time tinkering at his assigned research, he lived in a pleasant dream rationalizing the effect of what he would say.

Disillusionment came crushingly when he saw Neva Tupper's sympathizers for the first time. They met in a small, suburban church; the minister was himself one of the group. Dodd showed his surprise, and the minister smiled a little sadly.

"And shouldn't God," he asked, "have a stake in man's freedom? No committee, no government, Dr. Dodd, can assume the responsibility for our individual souls."

Dodd sat with Neva Tupper on the platform. The minister offered a prayer; then Miss Tupper introduced the professor. He arose and faced the audience with dismay: Ten women and four men—a handful against the multitude! What purpose would all his carefully-prepared rhetoric serve here? He would be speaking in a vacuum.

Nevertheless, he opened the page he had brought from the outlawed book, and in a flat, lifeless voice he began to read: the words that were burned in his

memory—the bitter diatribe of a man who had looked clear-eyed into the future and who had written the death sentence of a civilization.

Then, quietly and unemotionally, Dodd made his proposal. "We have waited too long for the committee to discover a new world for us; it's time we seized one of the space ships and did the exploring ourselves."

This was the crux of his idea; he expanded on it rapidly. Once the ship was aloft, no one could stop them; if they discovered a habitable planet, the committee couldn't very well keep the information secret.

Suddenly Neva Tupper interrupted him. "It would be impossible for us to steal a ship, Dr. Dodd. The Central Project walls are protected by a photo-electric alarm system."

Dodd glanced at her with a speculative frown. "Quite true, Miss Tupper, although that information has generally been considered top-secret."

"It's foolish for us to make plans we can't carry out. What we must do is organize a campaign of agitation to force the committee to increase the food ration."

"We can't break through the Project walls," Dodd admitted; "but there's nothing to stop us using the entry gate."

"That's guarded by—" She stopped quickly and said instead, "But I'm sure, Dr. Dodd, the gate would be carefully guarded."

Her slip had been obvious, she knew as much about the compound as Dodd did—maybe more. He realized why he had felt so much distrust when he first met her. She was playing a masquerade for purposes of her own. A committee agent? That seemed logical; it was rumored that they encouraged sympathizers in order to betray them. But if he told his audience what he suspected, they would disband in fear. No, he had to play Neva Tupper's game—for a time, at least.

HE ANSWERED her calmly, "As a matter of fact, you're right, Miss Tupper. There is a gate guard at the Project, a most loyal and conscientious man—who happens to be a friend of mine. What I suggest is that we persuade him to join us. After that, it would be no problem to get into the compound."

"But a loyal man wouldn't—"

"Not willingly." Dodd smiled. "But the committee hasn't allowed the poor Sergeant to develop much in the way of critical judgment. He sees everything in strong blacks and whites; it will be rather amusing to put him in a position where he has to help us whether he wants to or not."

The girl raised no other objection. Dodd turned toward his small audience and finished his talk. He was amazed at their enthusiasm, the hope gleaming in their eyes. They clustered around the platform, pumping his hand and volunteering to bring friends to another meeting if Dodd would talk again.

The professor tried to follow Neva Tupper when she left the meeting. He traced her to a cheap hotel. For a long time, Dodd waited in the lobby; but he didn't see the girl again. Eventually he asked the desk clerk if Neva Tupper were registered for a room; the clerk said she leased one on a monthly basis—number fifty-eight. After waiting another fifteen minutes, Dodd climbed the stairs and knocked on her door; there was no answer. He bent down and glanced through the keyhole. The limited view he had of her room told the story: on the dressing table lay her gaudy jewelry, and beside it a black wig stood on a wooden stand. In this room the girl had divested herself on her Tupper personality and appearance; she had departed as someone else. Who? That Dodd had to know—and quickly.

## 3



THE NIGHT following Dodd's first talk in the church, his original audience had grown from fourteen to twenty-five; twenty-four hours later it numbered fifty. People grasped at the idea of escape with des-

perate eagerness.

Very rapidly they agreed upon a date—two days away—when they would invade the Central Project and seize a space ship. Until he identified Neva Tupper, Dodd wanted to put it off; but he was afraid to interfere with their plans because it might kill their enthusiasm. He never succeeded in following the girl again, even as far as the hotel; she invariably slipped away from the meetings ahead of him.

None of the sympathizers had more than a rudimentary concept of physics. Since the ships which they had seen pictured in the newspapers and on the television reports had seemed very large, they assumed that fifty people could easily crowd aboard. None of them was a trained pilot; none had even driven an automobile. But that problem didn't disturb them either.

"We'll kidnap one of the trained pilots," Dodd proposed. "They're kept isolated in the receiving stadium—far more restricted than we are. As a matter of fact, no one in the compound has ever met a full-fledged pilot. But I'm certain any of them would be willing to help us."

In order to persuade the Sergeant to co-operate, Dodd stole a number of more or less incriminating papers from the guard room. On the day of the attack, which was planned to coincide with the Sergeant's day off, Dodd was

to bring him to the church. The sympathizers would show him the stolen papers which, in a sympathizer hearing, could be used to prove that the Sergeant himself had been a member of the group.

Such cloak-and-dagger plotting would do the trick; Dodd was certain of that. All his life it had been dinned into the Sergeant's head that the one incontestible evidence against a sympathizer was a sheaf of legal-looking papers. It would never occur to him that he might explain his way out of the mess; sympathizer explanations were lies because sympathizers made them.

It wasn't until three hours before the attack on the compound that Dodd finally identified Neva Tupper. And, in the first flush of cold fear, he thought that everything he had planned—everything he had hoped for—was lost.

It happened when Dodd was in the guard office, shortly after noon. Dodd had gone to chat with the Sergeant. In her shiny convertible Sara Rupert left the committee enclosure and drove through the Project gate. She stopped to talk to the Sergeant, and Dodd, in the guard room, recognized the unmistakable, throaty voice of Neva Tupper.

"You're off this afternoon, aren't you, Frank?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Rupert."

"You'll take in a show, I suppose?"

"Later on. I'm going to the city with Dr. Dodd. He has something he wants me to see—an exhibit of some kind at one of the churches."

"Enjoy yourself, Sergeant." She laughed irrepressibly.

WHEN THE Sergeant returned to the guard room, Dodd was leaning weakly against the desk, his face putty gray. "Has something happened, Dodd? You feeling sick?"

"I'm all right, Sergeant," he whis-



pered. "I—I sometimes have a touch of arthritis." Any excuse would do, so long as Dodd didn't give himself away. "It's all this walking back and forth to the city—"

"Today, professor, we'll go in style. I'm entitled to use a Project pool car four days a month, and I still have one left in this ration period."

"Thanks." Dodd had to do something; he knew that. And the need for action gradually pushed the fear out of his mind. The idea occurred to him intuitively—the way he could capitalize on Neva Tupper's identity. He said, "I forgot to mention it before, Frank: I'm showing some things in the exhibit. You won't mind if we take a box along with us?"

"Anything you like; I'll be ready to leave by three."

Dodd managed to trip as he moved toward the door. With very realistic awkwardness he snatched at the file cabinet. It overturned, spilling forms and blanks on the floor. Apologetically he stooped and began to push the mess of papers together.

"Don't bother," the Sergeant told him; "I'll have one of the men clean up after we leave."

The professor stood up again, holding his hand pressed against his hip. "I'm not as agile as I used to be."

Very slowly, limping to make the illusion convincing, Dodd left the guard room. Until he was inside his own apartment building, he didn't move his hand from his hip. Then he released the paper he had taken from the confusion on the office floor, and slipped it quickly into his pocket.

A numbered, military, requisition form: by all odds, the most damaging item Dodd could have had in his possession. Normally it would be missed and traced immediately; but it was improbable that the Sergeant would sort out that jumble of papers before three o'clock.

Now that Dodd knew Neva Tupper

was Sara Rupert, a committee heir, he could fill in the rest of the picture. There had always been internal conflict within the committee. Undoubtedly Sara Rupert meant to use the sympathizer attack that afternoon to demonstrate the weakness of the current line-up of authority. If she could promote her father into the chairmanship, she obviously stood to inherit that more powerful position herself.

Dodd was sure he knew what she would do now. As Neva Tupper—with credentials identifying her as a committee agent—she would demand a police patrol from the city commissioner and arrest the sympathizers after they met in the church. She wouldn't do it in her own name, he thought, because the attack would lose much of its psychological effect on the committee if Sara Rupert's name were connected with it.

**D**ODD WENT to the compound arsenal. He filled out the requisition form and pushed it into the pneumatic tube. In fifteen minutes, the box slid down the ramp, gliding on rollers toward the military barracks. With some difficulty, Dodd wrenched it out of the trough and lugged it to his apartment building. There was only a small chance that he might be seen; the organization of the compound prevented that. It was early afternoon, and every guard would be at his post, or marching out a drill; every scientist would be in his laboratory. Only those who, like Dodd, were enjoying their weekly free day would have been in a position to notice the theft; and they were away from the compound in the city, where they could escape the microphones.

Dodd put his box by the apartment steps and sat waiting for the Sergeant, enjoying the warm, June sun. Idly he wondered if, on their new world, the sun would seem as bright or the grass as green. He was amused at his own assumption that the escape would be

successful. In the beginning he had made the proposal—or so he had thought—to stir an audience into action against the committee. But their enthusiasm had infected him, so that he took himself seriously.

Shortly before three o'clock Dodd and the professor left the compound in an old, wheezing station wagon. Dodd sat with his box on the seat beside him, saying nothing. When they reached the church, Dodd asked the Sergeant to wait in the car while he took the box inside. "The exhibit isn't scheduled to open just yet," he explained. "You won't mind waiting a few minutes, Frank?"

"Not at all, professor."

Inside the church Dodd opened the case of rifles he had requisitioned from the arsenal. Bluntly he explained the situation to the others. He could tell the truth now; it was too late for anyone to back out. Surprisingly, no one suggested that, either.

Dodd stationed six of the sympathizers in front of the altar, as window-dressing when Sara Rupert came to make her arrest. The others, carrying the rifles, were concealed among the pews.

From the choir loft, Dodd watched the street; the Sergeant still sat in the car in front of the church, chain-smoking cigarets. A great deal depended on the Sergeant being outside when the girl arrived; he was bait. Sara Rupert would want to make her bag of sympathizers as impressive as possible, and that meant including the Sergeant if she could. When she saw him in the station wagon she would know he hadn't yet been forced to join the sympathizers. If the girl would bring the Sergeant into the church instead of her police patrol—

Dodd set his jaw grimly. That was all he asked: to get her inside alone.

A big police van rumbled to a stop a short distance from the church. Sara Rupert, wearing the gaudy spangles and the black wig of Neva Tupper, got

out. Dodd saw her ordering the police officers—he counted thirty—into hiding near the church door.

She walked up the steps; then she looked back and saw the Sergeant. And, after a momentary hesitation, Sara Rupert did what Dodd had guessed she might, she went back and talked to the Sergeant.

**D**ODD COULDN'T hear what passed between them, but judging from the Sergeant's behavior—his sudden snapping to attention—Dodd guessed that Frank had either identified Sara Rupert, or she had identified herself to him. The two of them came into the church together. Dodd saw her make a gesture to the police, obviously conveying the fact that her plans were changed; they weren't to enter the church with her.

The girl seemed disturbed when she saw the handful of people waiting in front of the altar. Dodd grinned. For an uncomfortable moment the girl and the Sergeant stood facing the minister. No one spoke; no one trotted out the tell-tale papers that were to betray the Sergeant.

Impatient and angry, Sara Rupert decided to do the job herself. She handled it bluntly, curtly, smashing into the Sergeant's shell of security—and apparently enjoying what she did.

"You're a sympathizer?" the Sergeant gasped in an incredulous whisper. "You?"

"And you're joining us, Sergeant; otherwise, the papers we have would make very convincing evidence at a hearing."

"But you know the truth." The Sergeant put an appealing emphasis on the personal pronoun. "You know the papers were stolen."

"We're bargaining for your help; take us through the gate and you can have the papers back."

"You're ordering me to do this?"

"Yes, Sergeant."

"Then—then I agree, of course."

The Sergeant must have known who she was, Dodd decided. And he was obeying her blindly—even to the point of aiding sympathizers—because she symbolized the committee, and she gave the orders.

The girl backed toward the church door. Dodd saw her draw her revolver. He stood up, signaling the others. They arose from pews on both sides of the aisle, facing her with the rifles.

Dodd spoke coldly, "Up to now, Miss Rupert, we've played this your way; from here on in we call the shots."

"My name is Tupper."

"We've no time for bluffing. The space ship is scheduled to leave at five o'clock; we're going to be on it. We intended to use the Sergeant to get us through the gate, but you make a better hostage."

"I've thirty police officers outside."

"We know that; but they're under your command, so you'll call them off."

"You can't take the ship, Dr. Dodd."

She bit her lip. "There are too many of you, and—"

"Then we'll seize others. With Sara Rupert to handle the details, we won't have any trouble."

Abruptly she was at ease again; a sly smile hovered on her lips. "If that's the way you want it, Dr. Dodd—" Her shoulders shook with laughter. "I'll even make it easy for you; I'll send the police away, and we can take over their van."

## 4



HE STRODE to the door and issued the orders. Dodd was puzzled. He had expected arrogant refusal, or at least an attempt to bargain; there was a joker in the deal somewhere, but he couldn't spot it.

"These people are real sympathizers,

Miss Rupert?" the Sergeant asked her. "And you—you've been working with them?"

"I organized them, Frank."

"You were going to arrest me, too."

"You were part of my plans, yes."

"But you knew I hadn't—it was false evidence—"

The girl laughed. "You're so wonderfully naïve, Frank!" It amused her, Dodd realized, to watch the Sergeant squirm to hold fast to his sense of loyalty. She enjoyed torturing his obedient mind with the disillusionment. "There are no real sympathizers," she added; "nothing but these little shows the committee occasionally has to stage."

"Then these hearings we read about in the papers—"

"Effective, aren't they? One of the first committees worked out that deal. Names—people always believe so firmly in names."

The minister broke in, "So the committee forces us to live a sham."

"Force?" Her voice was a silky whisper. "Where are the military police or the prison camps, except in your minds? The committee exists because you—you the people—wanted your world this way. We've taken nothing from you that you haven't handed over on a silver platter."

This, too, was true, Dodd thought. So the curtain came down not in the drama of atomic war, but in the whisper of the big hush. No! He refused to believe it!

The girl glanced at her watch. "But you want to run away. The professor invites you to escape, and try again on another world; we mustn't be late for the launching of the ship."

Before they left the church, she removed her wig and restored the make-up of Sara Rupert. She was entirely co-operative—too much so, Dodd decided, and couldn't understand why.

The sympathizers crowded into the police van and, with amazing ease, they drove through the gates into the compound. Dodd had supposed he



would have to make some sort of explanation to the guard—even perhaps, to resort to force; but the presence of Sara Rupert was all the passport they needed.

They disembarked and entered the terminal building of the interstellar port. Since a ship was scheduled to be launched very shortly, Dodd had expected to find the halls crowded with mechanics and technicians, but the building was empty. He had thought they would encounter guards; there were none.

Sara Rupert took them through the dark television studio, from which committee members made reports to the public on the progress of space exploration. Dodd flung open the metal doors and the mob surged across the field toward the ship. At the same time, from a cement pillbox, four men ran toward them, waving their arms. Four soft, fat, gray-haired men—a majority of the committee: every person in the mob recognized them.

The sympathizers seized the men. Sara Rupert threw back her head and laughed. At the same time the vanguard of the throng washed against the hull of the ship and pulled open the door. And the din of their excited voices died into silence.

The silence of the big hush.

For the interior of the ship contained nothing but fuel tanks. Everyone in the mob knew what that meant—no space ship existed; no man had ever soared beyond the atmosphere of the earth. This ship was no more than a duplicate of experimental rockets which had been developed more than a century before.

The big hush.

**S**TRANGLED BY secrecy, science had degenerated into a mockery of itself. The teacher was a shadow man, going through the motions of research he no longer understood, trying to solve problems he could not define.

In a tired, lifeless voice Dodd re-

peated the words he had read in the forbidden books, the death-sentence on civilization which a man had written long ago: *"We shall not die bravely, in the cacophony of atomic war or the dramatic clash of noble principles in conflict. Death for the ant heap will come with a shameful whimper, a burlesque of greatness spewed up by the shallow slag of small minds, until we die at last in silence—the cringing paralysis of the big hush."*

With an air of detached amusement, Sara Rupert made an explanation. The committee, she said, had to invent a way to distract the public from the very real problem of too many people and too few resources. The sympathizer fear alone had not been enough, and a search for a new world became an ideal substitute.

"It was dramatic, courageous adventure," she told Dodd; "the sort of thing small minds like to live vicariously."

The committee set up the space school, but made the requirements so absurd that no one ever qualified as a pilot. They saw lists of names of other graduates, of course; but the names were no more real than those of sympathizers reported in the daily hearings.

"Now we know the truth," the minister said grimly. "We'll report it to the people, and what we say will destroy your committee."

"On the contrary, you'll end in the asylum."

"You're at our mercy, we'll take over the committee and—"

"And what would you change? The committee is what it is because it's what the people want."

Dodd knew she was right on both counts. "The big hush," he repeated. He put his hands over his face, and his shoulders shook with sobs.

Sara Rupert gestured toward the terminal building. "You're quite free to go, all of you. The committee has no intention of keeping you here against your will. There are no real prison camps, you know."

"I strongly advise you not to talk, but suit yourselves. If you make too much trouble trying to persuade others to believe something they don't want to believe, the people will eventually force us to try you as genuine sympathizers."

Some of the men on the fringe of the mob turned away. What else could they do, Dodd asked himself bitterly?

**S**UDDENLY the Sergeant seized a rifle; he held it leveled at Sara Rupert and the four oligarchs. "You're right, Miss Rupert," he said. "Right—to a point. We wouldn't believe this—" He pointed toward the ship in the launching rack. "—because we've lived with our dream too long. You promised us a new world; we swallowed that promise. And whose fault is it? Ours, because we made ourselves fools; yours, because you took advantage of us. But the real responsibility—"

The Sergeant swung toward Dodd. "—the real responsibility is the teachers' and the scientists'. They let themselves be straight-jacketed by the Central Project, and they knew what the results would be. Why? I doubt that even the professors could answer that now. Maybe they were afraid; maybe they thought they shouldn't hold unpopular opinions; maybe they were too sophisticated to let themselves become martyrs."

With the barrel of the rifle, the Sergeant nudged Dodd and the committee members toward the television studio. "As you say, Miss Rupert, the people won't believe the truth. Why should they?"

He snapped on the power and the red warning lights glowed above the waiting cameras. Dodd knew that automatically all committee telecasts from the compound were channeled into every station in the country.

"What do you want us to do?" Miss Rupert demanded.

The Sergeant grinned savagely. "Willingly or not, the teachers have



conspired with the committee to create a monstrous sham—this thing Dodd calls the big hush. We do have a real problem—too many people; too few resources. But instead of trying to solve it, you've fed us this nonsense about space flight and a new world in the sky. All you have to do, then, is make good on the lie. You're going in front of the cameras and announce officially that the new world has been found. Invite the people to sign up as colonists. You'll guarantee the first flight will leave in—let's make it easy on you, and say six weeks."

"That's impossible, Sergeant! We don't have even a space ship now!"

"You have a prison compound of captive scientists; you have access to all the knowledge accumulated in the past; you have absolute control over all our resources. What else do you need?"

"Brains," Dodd answered, "Intelligence, a free mind—"

"Freedom is something you make for yourself, professor."

"Suppose we can't produce a space ship in six weeks?"

"I'll be generous, Dodd. If you like, tell the people the other problem is solved—the real problem. Tell them that in six weeks we will have a new source of power and a way to produce all the food we need. Tell them the rationing is over and the Central Project is closed. Stop looking for something you can blame, Dodd; stop calling

this the big hush, as if that absolved you of all responsibility."

The Sergeant pushed them in front of the camera. "Say exactly what I told you. If I shoot, I'll shoot to kill. I have no more regard for the value of your unimportant lives than you had for my loyalty. Miss Rupert knocked my world into a cocked hat; now it's up to you to put together a better one."

Dodd was choked with emotion, a resurgence of the faith he had lost.

The big hush? No, and there would be none. Individual cultures might die, strangled in their web of self-made fear, but man—the thinking entity—would hammer out a means of survival. An instinct in the human mind refused to accept oblivion. The Sergeant, reacting in terms of that instinct, had torn the fabric of his world apart; he offered them a six week's reprieve.

Whether science could learn to act in freedom, after a century of servitude, whether the teachers and the scientists could solve the problem, mattered not at all: in six week's time this culture would die, one way or another.

Dodd accepted the verdict and was satisfied. When it came his turn to face the camera, he did so with a new strength, drawn from the quiet, intent gaze of the Sergeant—the average man, the voice of the mob, who refused to resign himself to the slow death of the big hush.



## Editor's Choice

editor could accept at the time, but nonetheless returns, are relevant.

As with the case of accepting stories he didn't care much for, this principle, too, cannot be invoked too frequently without peril. But grounds would include: (a) it really wasn't too good a story—the editor just liked it because it presented one of his pet ideas, etc; (b) despite the fact of its being an awfully good story, there were serious scientific flaws in it; (c) it would please a handful of readers mightily, but would be meaningless to most—just plain obscure and esoteric to anyone who wasn't

(continued from page 35)

an avid admirer of Chinese ideograms, for example.

And the most unkindest cut of all is when an editor sadly—but with a sense of duty done—returns a story he enjoyed immensely on some such grounds; the story appears in a competing magazine, copying the cover; readers rave and vote it top place in the issue, while anthologists tumble over themselves to obtain book rights.

The rest is silence.



# READIN' AND WRITHIN'

## Book Reviews

L. SPRAGUE de CAMP



**B**ASIL DAVENPORT is a strongly-built, ruddy bachelor in his forties with an explosive manner of talking. He is a former Rhodes Scholar and has for many years been a Book-of-the-Month Club judge. He has also taken some part in science-fiction fan-activity in New York City. He has read more than anybody I know and remembers an appalling lot of it, which he can produce instantly on demand.

Now he has written an essay, "Inquiry into Science Fiction" (NY: Longmans, Green & Co., Inc., 1955 87 pp., \$2.50). This belongs with Bretzner's "Modern Science Fiction", and similar critical studies, on the shelves of all professional and serious connoisseurs.

The book is sound rather than startling. Davenport tells briefly the history of the genre, explains fans and bems, takes a healthy swing at most SF movies and comic-strips, and analyzes the speculative and gadget-based type of story, of which latter he takes Czapek's "R.U.R." as the archetype. He discusses the appeal of science-fiction to emotions other than the ones aroused by the most fiction and speculates on the genre's future.

**I**N 1953-54 a dozen British scholars gave a series of talks over the BBC on famous legends as they appear in the light of modern discoveries in archeology and allied sciences. These twelve broadcasts have been printed as a book, "Myth or Legend?" by G. E. Daniel *et alii* (NY: The Macmillan Co., 1955, 125 pp., \$2.50). The list of chapters tells you the scope of the book: "Lyonesse and the Lost Lands of England; the City of Troy; Glastonbury and the Holy Grail; the Flood; Theseus and the Minotaur; Tara; Tristan and Isolt; St. George and the Dragon; the Isles of the Bless'd; the Druids and Stonehenge; the 'Lost Continent' of Atlantis; Nemi and the Golden Bough." The book, in the high tradition of British popularization, is uniformly good, though the treatment of some topics is sketchy because of the limitations of radio-scripts.

The most striking fact I hadn't known is that the actual tomb of Tristan—the real thing, not a modern fake—still exists in the southwest corner of England. It is marked by a seven-foot pillar with a worn inscription, in Latin, reading: "Here lies Drustans, son of Cunomorus." Marcus Cunomorus, a post-Roman king of Cornwall, was

evidently the prototype of Tristan's uncle, King Mark, in the legend. Professor Bradford's treatment of my own mythological specialty, Atlantis, is much like mine on a small scale.

Not long ago I should have criticized the foregoing two books as overpriced for their small size. However, I also remember complaining through the post-war years that the price of everything but books had doubled, so that my income had failed to keep up with the cost of living. If at last books have begun to catch up, what am I kicking about?

**W**ILLY LEY has brought out the third book of his fantastic natural-history series: "Salamanders and Others Wonders: Still More Adventures of a Romantic Naturalist" (NY: The Viking Press, 1955, 293 pp., \$3.95). Most of what was said about its predecessors, "The Lungfish, the Dodo and the Unicorn" and "Dragons in Amber", applies to this volume. In other words, if you like monsterlore, you must have it.

At the beginning, a discussion of cave-salamanders and the curious life-cycle of the axolotl of Mexico leads into an account of a scientific hoax second only to the Pilt-down hoax: Kammerer's faked genetic experiments with toads and salamanders. This deception led to the production of a Soviet propaganda-movie, *Salamandra*, portraying Kammerer as the victim of a frame-up by priests and aristocrats, because the noble fellow wished to support Communism by proving the inheritance of acquired characters. Of course the framing was the other way round. A chapter deals with Little People: australopithecoids and Congo Pygmies. About the yeti or abominable snowman, Willy says we-ell, if "a near-human and very primitive race" had managed to survive in the Himalayas, it would fit the descriptions of the yeti. He takes up three legendary and half-legendary trees—the upas tree, the man-eating tree of Madagascar, and the coco-de-mer tree which bears the world's biggest nuts—and finishes with accounts of some wild species hanging on to life after near-extinction: the Bermuda cahow, the sea-otter, and the giant tortoises.

**T**HERE HAVE recently been several big, heavy volumes published on what the

Germans call *Kulturgeschichte*. This means approximately cultural history, though we need a better word for it. Legends and monster-lore are part of it.

The latest, and one of the most successful one of these books, is "The Tree of Culture" (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955, xv + 692 pp., \$7.50), by the late Ralph Linton, at the time of his death in 1953 the leading American anthropologist. The book covers an enormous ground, dealing with the evolution of man, his basic inventions, the hunting life and the food-raising life, and the various major cultural areas like Southeast Asia. The book is full of ingenious ideas and insights, as for instance that at an American family dinner, father carves the meat while mother ladles the vegetables because once father collected the meat with his spear while mother grubbed the vegetables with her digging-stick.

Mrs. Linton finished the final section from Linton's notes after his death. The book suffers from the effects of posthumous publishing. There are a singular lot of lapses in grammar and spelling (e.g. "denison" for "denizen") and sections written in opaque professorese. But there are also a good deal of wit and a lot of unexpected and illuminating facts you never heard.

**T**HE BOOK has a wide overlap with one published last year: Carlton S. Coon's "The Story of Man" (NY: Knopf, 1954). This likewise deals at length with the primitive stages of man's history and his major cultural subdivisions, but only briefly with his post-literate history. Thus the Persian, Macedonian, Roman, and Islamic empires are told off in a paragraph or two as simply four examples of the same phenomenon.

Coon emphasized that "Human beings have been hunters for a long time, and our psychology is adjusted to this kind of life. . . . Man is a creature fashioned around and selected for hunting." I have heard one of Coon's fellow-anthropologists condemn him publicly for saying that "we are basically nothing but hunters." This is not what Coon said. His actual statements, as you see, are otherwise, and are moreover true. Still, these statements can mislead if not taken with critical care. Even if we are evolved for hunting, it is not true that we can't adapt ourselves to other kinds of life—though not necessarily with ease and

smoothness. As Linton makes a similar point: "We are, in fact, anthropoid apes trying to live like termites, and as any philosophical observer can attest, not doing too well at it."

**A**NOTHER big book that came out last year was Paul Herrmann's "Conquest by Man" (NY: Harper, 1954). This translation from the German deals with the history of exploration, travel, and trade. Hence it overlaps some of the territory of geographical myth that Willy Ley and I covered in our "Lands Beyond". There is an interesting section on the disappearance of the Norse colonies in Greenland, which perished from trying to carry on their traditional economy, based on wood, iron, and cattle, in a land where timber and iron were lacking and there was not enough grass to keep their cows alive.

Books of this size inevitably contain errors in their first editions; nobody can be an expert on everything at once. These have their share; thus Coon calls Willard F. Libby "William Libby" (in connection with radio-carbon dating) and dates the stirrup from the Middle Ages, when it was several centuries older and goes back to B. C. in Central Asia. Herrmann has the most serious ones—serious enough to make the book of dubious value. He misdates the pyramids and the rise of the Mayan culture, misspells the legendary Riphacan Mountains, and repeats the long-exploded

theory of Termier that the hardened lava dredged out of the middle of the Atlantic proved the existence of Atlantis. You read this one at your own risk.

**T**HOSE WHO read my account of J. R. R. Tolkeins "The Fellowship of the Ring" in my last review may have had a frustrating experience in trying to get a copy. It seems that Houghton Mifflin had a contract to import printed sheets from the British publisher, George Allen & Unwin, and bind them in this country. But the sheets got caught in the British dock-strike and sat on the pier for months. Now, I understand, you get deliveries in a reasonable time. The second volume of the trilogy is also out: "The Two Towers" (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1955, 352 pp., \$5.00). I'm happy to report that it is even better than the first volume. It keeps its suspense up better, with fewer long slow sections. You will read of the death of Boromir, of the great massacre of the Orcs on the Anduin, the return of Gandalf the Gray, Frodo's passage through the Dead Marshes, the ambush of the men of Harad, and Frodo's invasion of the Dark Land. By the time this review appears you will probably be able to buy the third and final volume, "The Return of the King". When it appears I shall leap upon it with lascivious howls.



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It was wonderful: the "Munk Hour" topped all the popularity polls — and the budget couldn't have been much lower!

# THE MUNK HOUR

by BASIL WELLS

*illustrated by Orban*

**A**ROUND THE pale blond horseshoe of the conference table four men sat and smoked. Before them, in the hollow oval of the table, a gleaming tape recorder whirled and unreeled smoothly.

The short graying man with the aggressive dark eyes put down his cigar. He was Howard Plattner, director of four minor TV programs appearing over the WBC Network. In the past few months his dynamic grin had grown all-too-familiar to the reading public... He had discovered the "*Munks*".

He allowed a sample of his carefully cultivated smile to warm the chamber. There was no response; the smile blinked off.

"I am happy to announce," he said coldly, "that we gained fifty new station outlets, ten new sponsors, and two hundred new 'Munk' fan clubs. In addition, 'Munk' toys and clothing netted us a hundred thousand dollars this past month."

Francis Kilmer leaned forward. He ruffled the papers in his pink sausage fingers, his blue-shaven chins wattling.

"I wish to state, in my capacity as publicity director and public relations director, that in the past six months '*The Munk Hour*' has passed '*Lucy's Daughters*' in all popularity polls.

"Make that a uranium mine," Roland O'Sill cried hoarsely, tugging at his gray sand moustache and bellying his parchment thin cheeks with every word. "And a low-budget mine at that!"

The others laughed; even the fourth partner's lips parted.

The fourth member of the show's owners was chubby Benjamin Shulte, the ex-racket boss. He rarely uttered a word, but when he did his partners listened. ... His mouth closed. Apparently he had merely wanted to yawn.

"If the other actors," moaned Plattner, "on our network shows worked as cheaply. To raise their own food, to build their own apartments, and ask for no money—it is true artistry."

"For them—or for us?" O'Sill's hoarse whisper sparked another ironic round of laughter.

Plattner studied his watch. His head snapped up. "Nine-thirty," he said. "Shall we catch a bit of the act?"

The brisk little man crossed to the wall-inset video set and snapped it on. Across the room in the video mirror the carefully roughed and powdered face of an announcer appeared.

"...these lovable little creatures," the image mellowly intoned, "are presumed to have been the treasured pets





of some other-worldly race. There is little doubt that they were aboard the strange flying craft that fell into the Atlantic just last year.

"A young colored lad discovered them floating in a padded metallic cage in the ocean just off Daytona Beach. He rescued the fifteen Munks and sold them to a carnival owner.

"After a few weeks of exhibition in carnivals, and later, in a circus side-show, they were purchased by Howard Plattner and his associates. Through television's magic eye we can now watch the Munks eat, make love, and build their rude nest homes in a fashion more appealing than any native animal of Earth.

"All week, cameras are trained on the Munks as they live together in the garden Plattner constructed for them. From these films the hour long program is born.

"And now for a listing of our sponsors."

The names of the sponsors flashed briefly and clearly—and silently—upon the screen. Since the Kuttner Bill of the 1960s, singing and talking commercials had been banned...

**T**HE CAMERA'S eyes zoomed down out of outer space heading toward a continent, and a city; and finally narrowed to show only a translucent greenish deck, approximately fifty feet by a hundred feet, where cameramen and other technicians recorded the doings of the fabulous Munks.

At last, while ninety million Americans, fifty million Europeans, and a hundred million Orientals strained their eyes to see, the cameras cut down into the Munks' garden home.

Low shrubs and flowers, like a miniature forest, rimmed the enclosure. In one end, a small pond fed a tiny rill that looped carelessly across the grassy plots of ground beyond. The rill, after traversing the garden, vanished under the three-foot ball of feathery-light metal that had been the Munks' cage.

Beside the lake, a dozen oddly-constructed huts, none alike, housed the Munks.

Telescopic lenses brought them yet closer. Their facile monkey paws and upright carriage made them oddly humanoid, but the oversized teeth and the bright beady eyes, plus the reddish hair covering their little bodies, had earned them the title of chipmunk monkeys—and, finally, Munks.

They were without tails, and the stripe down their back was golden rather than black. Most of them wore rude pouches of woven grasses or leather about their middles, and the females were definitely mammalian in a breathtakingly human manner.

The largest of these Munks—a male—was slightly over four inches tall. He was confronting another Munk, as the camera caught him and his tiny hand snatched away a small object that

the other creature tried to hide. The smaller Munk sprang upon the larger, and the fighting began.

Sound was dubbed in very skillfully, and the voices of human actors, altered through voco-chambers, spoke in shrill English. It became apparent that a small human toy, or miniature machine, had been lowered into the gardens, and a part had been stolen. . . .

Plattner yawned. "I've seen this a few dozen times already," he said; "better shut it off."

Benjamin Shulte held up a restraining hand. "No."

"Very well." Plattner stood up and headed toward the hall. "I'll see you gentlemen a month from tonight."

**G**AVN TOOK the compact little torch from Omr's reluctant grip. This was the third time in the past ten days that he had caught the chunky young Nyhan carrying some of the equipment from the emergency sphere. This time he did not have to fight to regain them.

"Can you understand?" he demanded. "None of this equipment must be seen by the Titans."

Omr's affirmative thought was sullenly slow. As yet he was but a quarter grown, and his mental powers were yet more retarded by the hundreds of days he had spent in the carnival and circus tents. The crowding, stupidly-powerful mental impulses of the gaping humans, and the raucous thunder of their voices had made neurotics of all the Nyhan children. Already their delicate minds were warped.

"The Titans—the humans—think that we are animals, Omr. Cute, intelligent pets, yes, but not reasoning entities. Until we are grown, with all our mental powers fully developed, we must not be discovered."

"But, Gavn." Omr's directed thought was angry. "We need fear nothing here; for many days we have seen no men."

"What of the metal and plastic gadgets lowered into the gardens, Omr?

And I sense that there are many Titans close by."

"Because you are older than we others, Gavn, you try to rule us. Were you made our leader before the drive-pile blew?"

"Of course not, Omr. But I alone knew the speech of Nyh; it was I who taught you our language and our origin."

Omr laughed aloud. And when he spoke it was verbally, in the English of the men and women who stared at them: "This language is of more use to us. Soon I will find a man and speak with him."

"No, Omr; not until we are fully grown. I have sensed a—a lack of understanding. As animals, less than humans, we are tolerated, even loved. But never as intellectual equals."

"I cannot wait two of the Titans' years," Omr replied in the harsh grating speech of Terra. He walked away, his mind closed.

And Gavn was left alone to consider how he was to save these infants from themselves. They were little more than one year old, by Terran reckoning, and he was barely two.

*Why* the space ship had come from Nyh with its crew of three adult Nyhans, and the cargo of infants, he did not know. His memories of Nyh were scanty, too—although he knew that its vegetation was mainly a blend of lavender, a dusky yellow, and brown. It seemed, as he remembered now, that the sky was always a red flame—a sullen aged red that grew.

Aboard ship he had absorbed hundreds of record tapes, as did the several score other year-old Nyhans aboard—knowledge that would be stored there and integrated only with maturity. But the infants received no instruction.

After the crash into the ocean, their emergency sphere—the only one of thirty known to have escaped—had drifted ashore. And Gavn was left in charge of fourteen squabbling infant Nyhans. He lacked the key to the

knowledge he possessed; they must submit to exploitation and slavery.

"But I cannot remain here doing nothing," Gavn thought angrily, "while Omr betrays us to the Titans. I must have a way of escape prepared."

He headed toward the emergency sphere to replace the torch.

**D**ARKNESS came to the artificial garden of the Munks. A lone pale globe shone, moonlike, overhead. The thirty, carefully-devised suns that shed health and warmth by day were dead; and a lone watchman prowled the three-storied building above the translucent green deck.

Gavn left his hut of plastered mud, brush and grass, and stole along the belt of bushes and flowers to the escape sphere. Inside, in the sealed compartments beneath the padding, he selected torches, cutting tools, and an axe that was a handled keen disc.

He started under the metal globe, next to the wall, where the shrubbery would conceal the opening. He adjusted the torch to maximum power, swinging its beam in expanding and contracting tight circles close to the soil.

At full power the cutting flames were invisible, but the heat was very unpleasant. After a long moment he snapped off the torch and backed away.

"What are you doing, Gavn?"

It was the whisper of a friendly mind. He did not need to see the face. This was Ria, the female child who dodged his steps while he worked in the gardens. She was always underfoot and toppling-over equipment, but he could not be long angry with her.

"It is a secret, Ria. None of the others must know."

Ria's mind glowed "A secret just between you and me!"

"Perhaps you can help." The need for a confederate to cover his escape occurred to him. "You tag me about constantly; so, when I have left the garden you will report that I am sick."

"But the others will wish to see you."

"Tell them I wish to be alone; tell them that only you can bring me water and food."

"I will try." Her mind was doubtful. "Perhaps you should speak to them today and leave tomorrow."

"Splendid, Ria." He patted her sleek-furred back.

By this time the opening made by the torch had cooled. Gavn lowered himself carefully into the slanting tunnel, while the line he fastened about his middle was paid out by Ria. He was amazed at the length of the tube—at four feet it had encountered an ancient tile drain and burned two feet beyond.

"I am going to explore this opening, Ria; perhaps I can save much tunneling."

"Be careful, Gavn. Remember the four-footed monster—the rat—that attacked us in the place called Jacksonville."

"I have the torch; and the cutting tools will serve as weapons."

Gavn moved off along the silt-floored old drain, his torch cut to its lowest, and visible, power.

For more than a hundred feet he must have traveled, climbing toward the end, at a steep angle. Twice he used the torch to clear away sections of crushed tile and dirt. And then he came to a solid plug of stones and cement.

**G**AVN ANGLED the boring torch upward and to one side of the barrier. The glazed tile vanished and swiftly the root-threaded soil beyond melted. An unpleasantly gritty, warm vapor rushed back into the Nyhan's face.

Suddenly the backlash of air ended; he had holed through. Impatiently he waited until the crusted lining of the narrow tunnel could be touched, and then he started to ascend. He advanced for another three feet.

The cooler night air was about him. He sensed a slight breeze, and overhead

a quartering moon rode serenely. Nearby the roots and lower bole of a tree, loomed, and to the left, fifty or sixty feet distant, the silvery plastic blocks of the building he had quitted shone softly.

This was out in the country, a vast almost uninhabited expanse of trees and grass and weeds to the Nyhan's way of thinking, and he could find a thousand hiding places nearby. His resemblance to a Terran chipmunk—brought to his attention by the thousands of carnival and circus fans—would undoubtedly help, too; a chipmunk seldom rated a second glance.

Gavn was satisfied. He had prepared a way of escape from the garden, and now he could sleep. With the torch he extended, then covered the tunnel, so that it emerged beneath the tree. This accomplished he returned to Ria and then to his hut.

Darkness came again to the garden of the Munks, and Gavn made up a pack of the belongings he wished to take along. The other Nyhans would strip his hut of everything, once they discovered he had vanished. Reluctantly he had abandoned any thought of hiding his departure.

Although he had sent out word, by Ria, that he was not to be disturbed, all the inquisitive little Nyhans of the group had visited him—some five or six times. Omr, in fact, had seemed well pleased to see that Gavn was, apparently, in poor health.

From what little he could dredge from their minds, Gavn knew that he could teach them no more for several months—or even years. Perhaps it was better this way—the humans would remain amused and the Nyhans would not know how to counter, and thus antagonize, the Titans.

He had said goodbye to Ria before darkness came; so now he stole, noiselessly, from the hut.

He sealed shut the little tunnel entrance behind him, and hurried along the long drain to the exit under the

tree. He opened the little trap he had made of the tree's wood and bark.

"You are late, Gavn."

"Ria!" His mind was anger-warm. "Why are you here?"

"I am going with you. Sometime you will want a mate. I will travel with you until then, and I will be your mate."

"But I do not want a mate, Ria; and I wish to choose my own."

Ria's thoughts were serene, almost amused. "You would not want any of the females left behind, would you?"

"No, emphatically, no!"

"Then that leaves only me. Apparently you have no other choice; if you ever desire a mate, that can only be me. . . . Unless you return to Nyh."

"You win." He glowered ruefully. "And I'll be glad to have you along—but as a comrade."

"It would be lonesome back in that pen without you, Gavn."

**G**AVN ADJUSTED his pack and the extra pouches slung about his middle. Ria followed suit; each of them took a burning torch in his right hand and they pushed off into the moonlit night.

Several times that night they evaded prowling cats—once only by nipping the ferocious beast's pink nose with a half-power beam. They traveled swiftly, skipping along at a pace not too unlike that of the native chipmunks and squirrels; by dawn they had put several miles behind them.

"We are approaching the sea," Gavn informed Ria; "you can hear the surf. And, from the direction we have been traveling, I would say this is the great sea called the Sound. This being early Spring, the summer cottages will be unused. I am in favor of using one of them as our headquarters."

"Check," Ria flashed back in the uncouth English of Terra.

"Must you use that vulgar manner of speech, Ria?"

Silent merriment filled his brain. "I'm

afraid so, Gavn. We must spend the rest of our lives here on Terra; and some day I hope to become a citizen of this United States."

Gavn was amused. "We are not human, Ria. We are pets—or slaves if you wish."

"Nevertheless, I intend to apply for citizenship. Among the watchers in the circus were several aliens. I read their talking; they were soon to become citizens."

"All right, child, but now it is time to find shelter. How does this place appear to you?"

They stood in the long shadow at the base of a white-painted, little three-room cottage. To the Nyhans the building seemed immense.

"Very good. How do we get inside?"

"Under the wooden stoop, first. There, I think, is an opening. Help boost me up, Ria. . . . Yes, this crevice opens into the hollow shell surrounding the dwelling."

"And inside the shell run those terrible rats and mice." The thoughts of Ria shivered together in distaste.

"Don't worry, Ria, we are more than their equals with these torches."

Gavn hoisted Ria's pack, and then the tiny female Munk, to his side. A few moments later he had found a snug nest for them opposite an open nail-hole looking down into the cottage's interior. They occupied a rectangular space between the studding with a horizontal two-by-four only ten inches above their heads.

Gavn was too exhausted to eat any food, and Ria was in like condition. With their head on their packs they soon fell asleep.

"Television, Gavn!"

Ria was peering through the nail hole into the interior of the cottage. And now Gavn was aware of sound—of music; this dwelling was not empty after all.

Through Ria's mind he could view, imperfectly, the roughly finished room, the fieldstone fireplace, and the wall-

video screen. The television unit was invisible from where Ria watched.

Apparently the set was tuned to a station using ancient movies and television plays of the late fifties and early sixties. They were watching the end of a play featuring a mild little teacher and his equally inept young girl friend. The hero ended in a puddle of birthday cake, ice cream, and test tubes. . . .

"Naïve," a Terran voice, masculine in tone, commented, "but very effective in spite of the crudity of presentation."

The usual station signals flashed across the screen, and the sponsors' visuals followed.

"The acting is more natural," a woman's voice replied. "The artificial perfection of today destroys true realism. That is why the Munks are so appealing. Their actions are unheard."

"As I've told you before, Marie, the whole play is faked. Whether the Munks are controlled robots, or humans wearing disguises, I have no idea; I rather favor the idea that they are just super mechs."

The woman made a sound of disbelief. A chair scraped.

"I cannot believe that mental controls permit such natural acting, Howard. I know that mentally-controlled robots are used to portray extra-terrestrials and prehistoric creatures, but the fakery is always apparent."

"The low budget that Plattner admits to is in your favor," the man admitted. "But . . . this is it. The show from three or four months back."

THE CAMERA'S eye zoomed its visual trail down from outer space until it peered into the basement garden where the Munks lived together.

Excitement made Ria's mind blur momentarily, and only a sharp mental command brought the television screen again into focus. The announcer was carrying on with his introductory remarks.

"See, Gavn, it is us. The huts are



half-finished, and the gardens have not been planted with our seeds from Nyh."

"Watch and listen," cautioned Gavn.

So it was that they watched the repeat performance of a week's life in the artificial little world of Plattner's studio. Gavn saw himself helping the younger Nyhans, and saw four of the males, Omr the ringleader, talking together before they seized him and threw him into the lake. He saw Ria clawing angrily at the males, and witnessed their amusement at her tearful attack. He saw his fellows playing the intricate games that they had played aboard ship. . . . He saw them hunting insects and catching tiny minnows.

After a time Gavn lost interest. His mind shifted to the dimly-discernible brain of the man; and gradually he worked through the superficial layers of thought to the essentially alien core.

The man was named Howard Tate. He had gone through law school, fought in World War Triple, and married a sub-editor of a New York publishing firm. His flair for writing readable stories along science fiction lines was paying off—he was a lawyer in name only.

Tate, and his wife, Marie, were currently engaged in a publishing venture of their own. All the royalties from his seven or eight books, and from his short stories, were being poured into their three vocowire 'magazines'. So short for cash were they, that they had sold their home and were living in their summer cottage.

The Terran's brain was the first really intelligent mind that Gavn had contacted since the space ship's disastrous plunge. Tate possessed something of the cool scientist; yet, blended with this the warm understanding of a humanitarian. He could analyze, but he could also understand.

Gavn tried to get through to Tate's mind, to convey a message the man might pick up and pick apart until a second message followed. Beneath the superficial reception of the tele-

vised Munk Hour, he was pushing another thought into Tate's subconscious.

The Munk Hour ended. Tate snapped off the set; he turned to Marie. "Have you considered that the Munks may actually be intelligent creatures from another system? How must it seem to them to be exhibited like trained chimps or seals?"

"Your line of prattle changeth," Marie told him. "An hour ago you were all for calling them Allison's robots—mechs if you wish—playing a part."

"I could be wrong. Somehow I have conceived the idea that the Munks are intelligent entities, and that these tiny 'pets' are the babies—sole survivors of a space ship's destruction."

"Sort of a women-and-children first affair." Marie laughed. "You've written so much tripe about other galaxies and other dimensions you're beginning to believe."

"It's an idea worth kicking around, dear. Look, make us up some coffee and sandwiches—toasted cheese and bacon maybe. I'll get this down on paper before I forget."

UP IN THE wall, a thin layer of plasterboard shielding them from view, Gavn and Ria sat with their shoulders touching and their minds linked.

Gavn was elated. "This Terran is sympathetic," he told Ria; "through him we can influence many readers. The beginning of a movement to accept us could stem from Tate and his wife."

Ria agreed. She had understood the words of the two Terrans, but she could not keep up with Gavn's darting thoughts.

"Slowly we will acquaint this Tate with the history and customs of Nyh—the little that I remember," he thought ruefully. "And, later, we will make ourselves known to them both. We must launch an undercover campaign to make citizenship available to approved extra-terrestrials."

"That is what I wanted," Ria agreed. She snuggled closer against the furry little Nyhan's shoulder. "And sometime you will want a mate, so..."

"It may take years, Ria. I will not mature for another two or three years, but when I do much of the science of Nyh will be mine. We can win wealth with my inventions. And with wealth we could purchase our fellow Nyhans even if they are not accepted as citizens."

"It is sad that they must be exhibited as so many brainless creatures over video," Ria was thinking.

"And remain unpaid for their services." Gavn's thoughts were mocking. "Why not organize a union. These Terrans do. March with signs: UNFAIR TO MUNKS, or DOUBLE TIME ALL THE TIME."

"Why not? Make the Terrans realize that we are—that Munks are—thinking beings."

"The signs would only be considered a stunt on the part of Plattner and his associates, and the owners of the show would be warned of the danger. They could cut out any scenes that they considered harmful."

Ria yawned, her hard white teeth very long and very sharp. She rubbed her stomach. "So we leave things as they are. Now how about some food?"

"Right. I have some with me and we can get water outside."

In the walls there was a scurrying as of rats—or chipmunks—and the Terran stopped his machine-gunning of the typewriter to listen. He grinned. And Gavn caught the fugitive thought that perhaps the *little people* were coming in out of the cold.

Gavn did not know who the *little people* were, but he intended to learn. He had much to learn of Terra in the months ahead.

IN 1976 A. D. the Curtis Bill, to grant citizenship to any alien from another planet, or planetary system, or habit-

able moon—should such an alien or aliens ever be encountered—upon proof of acceptable intelligence, morality, and physical health, was passed. Actually the whole affair had the trappings of a good-natured rib at the then-President of the United States, a man much concerned with interplanetary exploration and the mechanics of rocketry. This was shortly after the second moon-rocket crashed on Luna, and the President was requesting another five billion grant.

The signing of the bill by the President, and the subsequent ironic, somewhat caustic, criticisms of the television commentators were viewed by Howard Tate, his wife, and another handsome young couple, in their spacious living room.

Three years had brought financial success to the publishing team—they controlled a bewildering maze of companies, factories, and industrial processes. And most of this they owed to the man who sat beside them watching the living wall panel.

"Gavn says we can start moving in on the Plattner—Kilmer-Shulte-O'Sill group," the trig red-headed girl said.

"Tomorrow," Howard Tate announced, "I'm getting our lawyers busy. Involuntary servitude was supposed to go out with the Civil War; now that we have some legal standards to measure alien intelligence with, it should be easy."

The tall stranger with the tawny hair smiled. "We are taking no chances. Three months ago Ria and I opened a new tunnel into the garden studio. We brought out all our compatriots and we have them well hidden."

Tate's dark eyes widened. He stubbed out a cigaret and came to his feet. "But the Munks! We watched them on television again just last Wednesday."

"You gave me the idea, Howard. The first night we found you and Marie—remember how you mentioned

controlled robots? And, after we became friends and partners, it was you who suggested that Ria and I use these robots bodies we wear."

"Am I ever dumb." Tate laughed. "You substituted Munk robots, linked through mentrols to your people."

"They are approaching maturity now," Gavn told the others, "and the tapes I prepared these last three years are educating them. Another six months of playing at life, and they will be ready."

"Ready." Tate nodded gravely. "Sure. But how are the people, the stiff-necked, proud, race-conscious citizens, going to react?"

"That," said Gavn, "has already been done for us by the video networks. A groundwork of affection and kindness toward the 'darling little Munks' has been laid."

There was no comment from Tate or his wife, but an aura of doubt clouded both their minds; Gavn felt an echo of that fear. He brushed the worry away. Surely, with the benefits that Nyh's science could bring them, the Terrans would welcome them.

"TEN THOUSAND a week is it?" demanded Plattner, peering down into the studio-garden of the Munks. "Do those sub-morons, those chipmunks without tails, think they can bluff me?"

"Turn off the lights for a couple of days; we have a year's supply of film ahead. Better make it a week. Give 'em a lesson."

"Mr. Plattner, sir," a balding little man said haltingly, "I think you should look down here; one of the Munks is being taken apart by the others."

"No! Stop them at once. First they destroyed the two Munks, three years ago, and if this one dies we'll only have twelve."

"But—you must see for yourself. This Munk is not alive. It is made of

plastic and metal—a robot! And now another is opening his fur. He too is a mech!"

"This is terrible." Plattner's teeth met in his cigaret, and the mangled stub dropped, unnoticed. "What can have happened?"

Two hours later, when Howard Tate's lawyers arrived, he began to understand.

Plattner was a broken man when he crawled aboard the Miami bound air shuttle that evening. For three weeks he remained away from New York.

In the new agreement the Munks were to draw eighty percent of the net profits. And, in return, they were to write, direct and act in their own productions.

Shortly after this, eighty of the ninety-two stations that had dropped the Munk Hour, signed for it again. Sales of Gray Jackass Shoes zoomed by twenty percent. Velvet Slink, second of the trio of sponsors retained, built two new soap factories for its exotic *squirty mistifiers* production, and the president of Flib Perfumes took a six months cruise.

The Munk Hour had never been more entertaining. All America again fell in love with the furry little aliens.

Two years passed before fifteen natively-furred aliens—the tallest of them less than sixteen inches in height—applied for their first papers. Several of the Titans' noisiest lawmakers balked; Curtis fumed. But we went ahead with our plans.

The vast video audience cheered for their plucky chipmunk-shaped heroes and heroines, and the pressure of their millions of letters and telegrams burst through all opposition. The Nyhans were granted immediate citizenship.

And that same year the first two hundred of our ancestors were born.



# THE PIECE THING

*A Strange,  
Absorbing Tale*

by **CAROL EMSHWILLER**

*illustrated by Emsh*

**"M**OTHER, MOTHER.  
Please. What is the word?  
Where is the thread? Send,  
send, loud and strong to me. I must  
come home."

I soared high and veered to the  
right; then I turned around quickly  
and went back, faster and farther.  
Then I slowed and turned left.

"Mother. Mother. I cannot hear you.  
I've lost the thread. Send out to me.  
Please, Mother."

I spiraled to the ground, then; a  
spark went out when I touched it. I  
stopped and rested on a red stone. I  
was very quiet. I listened and listened,  
but there was no sending sound.

"Mother!"

Up, I told myself; try higher. Per-  
haps she is there, sending you in to her  
along with the others. I left the rock  
and flew up very high until it got cold  
and it was hard to keep going.

Then, up high, I relaxed and floated  
on a ridge of cold gases.

"Mother, one is gone. It is I. I am  
lost and I cannot hear you any more.  
Please. Send me in to you; I want to  
come home with the others as I always  
do."

The drifting gas took me sideways. I watched and rested as we passed over a mountain far below.

*I must try hard, I thought. I'm nothing without Mother, and I must try hard to find her.* I left the lazy gases then and went higher, because that was the hardest way to go, and I knew it would be hard. Up I went until there was nothing but cold emptiness.

It was hard. It was the hardest thing I had ever done, but I kept on. "Mother, one is gone and it is I. Oh, it so hard to find you."

I went on and on for a long time. Sometimes I got tired and drifted with forces of nothingness that pulled me. And while I drifted I sometimes thought, "What am I?" for I was nothing without Mother. Then, when I had rested and drifted a little I went on as fast as I could. And every interval and every pulse, I sent out a call for Mother.

I went on. A long time passed; I grew thin and small until I began to be afraid I would be gone altogether. So I turned on my back to rest and save myself; I drifted then, with the unseen forces for a long time, not even calling out anymore.

At first there were three forces, but gradually two got weaker until there was just one great force. I lay still and let it pull me, for I was small and nearly gone. It pulled me until at last there was no longer just nothingness, and I drifted with another gas and found a new warmth. This revived me some, and I was able to send again a few calls; but still I only drifted. Draughts pulled me down, and I saw that there was land far below, and many things—things that were familiar and things, too, that I'd never seen before.

**I** WAITED and watched and moved with the currents. I was weak but sometimes I sent out to Mother. "I have seen many things," I called. "I want to tell you. You will like hearing

of them. Please call me in. I miss you and I miss the others," but I never got an answer.

Still I drifted, worn out, confused and discouraged—so discouraged sometimes that I went long times without sending out. And often I thought, "Who am I?" and "What am I?"

Then I passed over a large forest and many lakes and rocky ground. I drifted lower on the breeze and there was a rock, warmed by the sun; it reminded me of long ago before these hard, hard times, so I swooped down with what little strength I had. A spark went up when I touched it, and then I lay out flat on it, warm and feeling better than I had for a long time.

I didn't send. I was discouraged still, but I listened—and after a time, I heard a sending far away. Was it Mother? It had to be.

"Mother, here I am. Come for me. At last I've found you, but I am weak from searching. Come take me to you. Renew me. I need you so much."

I called loudly with all my last energy, but there was no answer. Just more sending and sending. It came closer, and after a while I heard the thoughts. They were confused and spoke of things I didn't know. It didn't sound like Mother.

"The old thing's tickin' fast, all right," I heard. "There's something in these rocks, I'll bet. This is my big chance; I can feel it. This is it. Listen to the thing tick. It's got a beautiful case of the jitters. Whew, it's hot! I'll stop and have a drink to celebrate the find."

The thoughts stopped moving closer, but still they were very close now. There was the thought of thirst and the thought of burning liquid—hot, yet cool at the same time. Then, "That's better, much better. Come on, ticker, let's find where this load is."

And then I saw it.

"Oh, Mother, it sends but it cannot be you. Can it?"

It came closer and it smelled, hot and bitter. I didn't have the strength to rise. I had called out so hard:

Then the thing said, "Hell," and then "Hell," again, and then, "What in hell is this?" It came down close to me—very close—and bitter, damp air came from a hole in it and blew upon me. If I was stronger I would leave.

"Maybe I've had a drop too much," it said.

Then it walked all the way around me, and closer and farther away. "Damn," it thought; "it's this thing that's radioactive."

It came very close again. "Funny lookin' thing," it thought. "I never did see anything like it before. Radioactive. Say, it might be worth something even if it ain't a uranium lode. Somebody'd pay good money for somethin' like this—scientists or somebody." It leaned close and pushed at me a little bit with a stick.

"Mother," I whispered, sending lightly.

"Huh?"

It received me. "Mother?" I asked.

"Say, what is this?" The hot breath retreated somewhat.

"Are you Mother?" I didn't think it was, but I wanted to make very sure before I gave up.

"Is that you?" the thing asked, now speaking in a whisper. "Is that you, callin' inside my head?"

"I call, I send to you. I search for Mother."

THE CREATURE backed off then.

"Get out," it shouted. "Get out of my head; I don't like it." It pulled out a small black metal thing and pointed it at me. "What are you, anyway?"

"I cannot answer unless I can send to you. Do you want an answer?"

"O.K., but watch out. Don't you move; I've got ya covered."

"I'm too tired to move," I said, "and I could not harm you even if I wished. I'm helpless without Mother."

The creature came a little closer again, but not as close as before.

"I don't know what I am," I said. "I don't know and I would like to know. Tell me what I am."

The thing took another step closer. "If you don't know then *nobody* does," it said. "Where did you come from anyway? Dropped from a flying saucer I suppose. Damn, I *am* drunk; I don't believe in them things."

"I come from Mother."

"Ha! don't we all?" The creature came quite close again.

"I'm looking for her. I've traveled a long way through the cold void to find her, but I can't find her. She never answers me. I call and call."

"You did come from out there, then." *The thing's valuable*, the creature thought. *It's worth more than Uranium, any day.*

"I'm just a piece," I went on; "I'm not a whole. I'm nothing without Mother. Mother is the whole and I'm just a piece. What shall I do?"

"I'll look after you," the creature said, and then it thought, *I'll look after you damn well—in fact till I see the scientists. It'll cost them something to get hold of you, too.* "You're helpless without Mother, eh? Well then, come to Papa."

Then, after a moment's wait, there were sharp prongs that bit into my sides. I was lifted a moment and then dumped into a metal box and the lid shut tight against the breezes and the blue sky. "There you are," the creature said, "nice and snug. Don't you worry none. I'll look after you from now on."

"It's very hot in here," I told it.

"I'm hot, too," it said. "It's a hot day; we're *all* hot, so cut out complaining."

"Mother, Mother, I need you," I called as loud as I could.

"Stop yappin' for your mother; she ain't here. She ain't on this earth, in fact. You just remember that. She ain't here, and I'd be mighty surprised if



she was. Now shut up and stop botherin' me; I'm going to look after you from now on, whether you like it or not."

I KEPT QUIET then, but it was so hot in the box. And the bouncing. It was a harsh way of moving this creature had—a harsh and bumpy way. Not like Mother. I wanted to send again. We had moved a ways now; perhaps she could hear me from here. But the creature didn't want any more sending. He said Mother wasn't here. I didn't believe him, not really. Mother was somewhere and I would find her sometime. I would send and send. But I didn't send now.

It got hotter and hotter; I was getting small again, and I began to be afraid I might go completely, so finally I did call out. "I'm going," I said. "I'm too hot. I shrivel. Help me."

"Don't think I don't feel exactly the same way," the creature said, "but I guess it's about time for a break. I could use one too. Lord, it is hot!"

The bumpy movement stopped, and that was some relief. The creature thought, drank, again, and I could almost feel it when it took a long, long drink. It felt good to it. Then it opened the box where I was, and something splashed in and covered me with dampness.

"Here," it said, "this'll do you good. Make you forget your troubles."

It burned and it prickled. "It hurts," I cried.

"Of course it hurts the first time down. You gotta get used to it. Keep quiet and don't be a crybaby."

"Ouch, ouch."

"I said shut up. From now on you speak when you're spoken to, and stop cluttering up my mind."

So I suffered and didn't say anything as we bounced along again; after a while the burning got a little better, though the itching was just as bad—if not worse. Soon I felt myself changing,



somehow. I wondered what it was, and I wished Mother was near and could tell me and comfort me. I felt so peculiar; I knew something strange and significant was happening to me, but I didn't know what.

After a while the itching stopped a bit and the changes seemed to slow; then I listened to the creature's sending to itself. "Bet this thing's important," it thought. "I'll go to town right away, tomorrow first thing. I could sure use the dough. I might even get a thousand dollars. That's what I'll hold out for, I guess."

It walked a while just looking at the rocks and trees, and then it thought, "Whiskey's runnin' out. I could go on a real binge in town tomorrow night.

That's what I'll do; I'll get in a real good one when I sell this thing. I won't come to for a couple of days." Then it walked faster and thought happy thoughts.

Soon, by its thoughts, I knew we were coming to where it lived, and that the bouncing would stop. I felt glad about that.

Then we did stop and it got cooler—for the creature especially, for we were in some sort of a shelter that kept out some of the heat. Still, inside the box, it was stuffy and the heat was slower in leaving it.

"May I come out now, please?" I asked the creature. "It is stuffy here in the box and still hot."

"I should say not," it answered. "I don't want to take any chances that you'll skip out on me; you're too valuable. You're a real museum piece and I'm going to hang on to you till I see some cold cash. That box is where you'll stay till then, so you might as well make yourself comfortable. And stop jumpin' into my mind all the time. It bothers me. I don't like it. Shut up from now on or you'll really get yourself heated up, on the stove too."

So I was quiet and just listened, and the creature thought, *food*, and went about fixing itself some.

**I** WAS CHANGING fast again. All my top and round ridges had stopped itching and now had lost all feeling. This frightened me and I yearned for Mother. I needed her reassurance and comforting—and most of all her explanation of what this was all about. And I wondered what I was and what I was becoming.

I lay and waited a long time, frightened about myself; after a while, I felt my whole top cracking into little pieces. I couldn't resist sending out, then. "I'm falling apart," I cried. "Mother, Mother."

But no one answered—not even the

creature. Then I listened to see what the creature was doing and if it was lying down—not sending any more, and not listening any more, either. It was just silent nothingness inside.

I dared to send out a few more loud calls for Mother, then. The creature didn't hear them and they didn't seem to disturb it; but I got no answer from Mother, either, so I stopped and lay quiet, feeling the changes coming in myself.

After a little while longer, my cracking top broke up into hundreds of tiny pieces. Loveable little pieces, I felt, every one of them. They belonged to me; I had made them and they no longer frightened me.

*What darlings*, I thought, and I swelled with pride. Cool juices filled me and I swelled and swelled and suddenly I felt a hunger—a new kind of hunger I'd never had. Hunger for food...organic food. Then I seemed to split underneath and I had mouths—many of them—that opened and shut.

The little pieces stirred about me. They were so small yet, so weak and tiny. "Wake up," I told them softly; "wake up, darlings. We must find food."

I changed still, and parts grew out and over and inside. And I swelled more; but though I was bigger, I was meager. I needed more substance. I was hungry.

I swelled till I touched the top of the box. I pressed against it and it popped open.

"Come, little ones, wake and move. I need you, every one. I need you now."

**THEY** CAME awake slowly. They cuddled close to me; they climbed on top of me and down my sides, and some of the strongest raised themselves a bit, testing their powers.

"That's right, fly. Try it when you are strong enough. Farther and farther, but not too far. Keep the thread; don't get lost. I need you all."

And they practiced and grew stronger. "Now," I said, "fly out and tell me about the creature, those that are strong and dried out." And they flew out and they sent back, "Yes!"

I raised myself out of the box then, and down to the floor. I was heavy as I'd never been before, round and heavy, and I needed substance. "I'm glad it is this creature," I said to the little ones. "It put me in a hot box and told me not to send. I don't like it, and I'm very hungry."

I came to where the creature was lying. I could raise myself still, though I was heavy, and I had a foot now to help. I came down on it and started to feed. It was so good.

Then it woke suddenly, sending out a big noise. It clawed at me and even ripped me in my soft places; but I was feeding and getting substance fast, and I repaired myself with the new juices as it tore. I grew bigger and stronger every moment. Its noise grew very loud, then, and it tore at me harder and

harder; but I was quite big. I fed as fast as I could, and soon the noise lessened and stopped; and soon after that there was nothing left to sip any more at all.

I was still not big, but I was bigger. I almost feared I wouldn't be able to get out the opening of the shelter, but I did squeeze through it.

"Come, darlings," I called, "we must find more creatures like that one. We'll go to that place it thought of. Town, it said. Fly out and find it and tell me things. But keep the thread; don't go too far. I need you all for I must eat more and grow more...lots more, and you must find the food."

I looked down at myself then, as I started away, and I saw that I was beautiful. I saw my reds and blues, and the shimmering green, and the white parts inside. How contented I felt, how calm. I no longer wanted to send to Mother. I no longer had questions.

I knew exactly what I was.



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# OH, YOU UFO

## *or, The Case For the Frying Pan*

by Richard Wilson

The moon was down,  
the night was dread,  
the UFO was overhead.

A Venus ship!  
O great delight;  
let's you and rival Martian fight.

The Martian came,  
the Martian saw,  
the Martian conquered, made the  
law.

Now, mighty tumult,  
scorch and blast!  
The nasty Martian's gone at last.

The Martian vowed  
that he was boss  
and Ike consulted Lewis Strauss.

We kindly thank  
these Planet Two men  
who, saving us, showed great  
acumen.

The AEC  
was exercised  
but Martians scorn what Earth  
devised:

But do they go,  
who've chased the vulture?  
Oh, no—they stay; they like our  
culture.

the atom bomb  
and hell bomb, too,  
were mushrooms for the Martian  
stew.

We are their hosts;  
they settle in;  
they kiss our wives and drink our  
gin,

For Tyrant Mars  
we slaved, profane,  
yet night meant home and coun-  
terpane. ...

yet carp, complain,  
bethink their mission  
a channel change on television.

The UFO  
again is high—  
and who comes now to blot our  
sky?

We fret, we seethe,  
we slowly burn—  
We wish the Martian would return.





# INSIDE SCIENCE FICTION

A Department For The Science Fictionist

by Robert A. Madle

## THE GOLDEN ATOM

**D**URING the years immediately preceding World War II Larry Farsace published ten issues of *The Golden Atom*, a mimeographed fanzine. It was a completely literate publication, noted primarily for its fine selection of bibliographical articles and its presentation of outstanding fantasy verse. An admirer of the works of Ray Cummings, Larry named his creation after Ray's eternally popular, "The Girl in the Golden Atom." Quite naturally the magazine came to be known as "Lylda," who, of course, was "The Girl in the Golden Atom."

Farsace entered the army in 1942, and the s-f world heard no more of him until approximately a year ago. Suddenly, like many old-time fans, Larry returned to the fold. He came back to science fiction imbued with enthusiasm which surpassed that of his pre-war activity. *The Golden Atom* was being revived in printed format, announced Larry. And the revival issue would feature a real scoop—a lengthy article by Harold Hersey, who had edited the very first fantasy magazine, *The Thrill Book*, in 1919.

Months passed. And with the passing of each month came an announcement from Farsace that "Lylda" was to be bigger than previously planned. Finally, several weeks ago, the revival issue of *The Golden Atom* arrived. To say its appearance completely flabbergasted us would not be sufficient.

The magazine contains *one hundred* printed pages—printed on the most expensive grade of paper! The photographic cover shows a beautiful blonde model holding the first issue of Hersey's *The Thrill Book*. Format-wise there has never been a fan publication to equal it, with the possible exception of Bill Hamling's *Stardust*, published in 1940, which was also a slick-paper printed effort.

Two long articles fill most of Lylda's 100 pages. And they are two of the most important articles ever to appear in a fan publication. Larry's article, "My Attraction to Science Fiction, Fantasy—and Why," is, in reality, a history of science fiction. It becomes obvious to the reader that Larry's interest in s-f is manifold, his knowledge of the subject incontestable, and his enthusiasm exuberant and boundless. Never before have we read an s-f article so factual and yet so fanciful; so nostalgic and yet so zestful; so replete with an interest in a subject which borders on love for that subject. New and old readers alike will thrill to Larry's "intimate study of the exciting field of science fiction."

The other featured article is probably the real reason for Lylda's reappearance. In "Looking Backward Into the Future," by Harold Hersey, an entire chapter is grafted onto the history of modern science fiction. And, amazingly enough, it is the *first* chapter.

*The Thrill Book* was published by Street

& Smith in 1919, and lasted through sixteen semi-monthly issues. Only the first eight were edited by Hersey and the magazine as, in reality, the brain-child of William Ralston, the General Manager of S&S, now Vice-President. When first projected (seven years before Gernsback started *Amazing Stories*) the basic idea of a 100% s-f magazine was there. The possibility of reprinting Poe, Wells, Verne, and so on, was discussed. However, it was decided to go all-out for "Thrills" and, as Hersey so aptly puts it, "I trimmed my sails to what I thought were the prevailing winds of public opinion."

The result was a magazine which printed science fiction, fantasy, weird fiction, and just plain adventure fiction. The glorious idea was modified, and weakened in the belief that the world was not quite ready for the all-science-fiction magazine. However, in looking backward, Hersey says:

*This compromise, was what destroyed the project in a short time. I blame no one but myself. I feel sure that had I been more daring, more certain of myself as an editor, and had I been better equipped with a wide knowledge of science fiction, I could have convinced Bill Ralston . . . of the need of a magazine almost 100 percent devoted to . . . this subject from the very start.*

The article is important, for an entire new era is covered—an era about which nothing has previously been written. Here we read of such writers as Tod Robbins, Fulton Oursler, Grege La Spina, Billy Rose, and of a youthful Murray Leinster. Throughout the article, one is impressed with Hersey's air of nostalgic remorse. For, as the article proceeds, it becomes painfully evident to both the author and the reader that one small decision meant so much; if Hersey had been more "daring," magazine science fiction would have been born in 1919 and, today, Hugo Gernsback would not be known as "The Father of Modern Science Fiction."

This issue, published in a limited edition of 1000, was produced at a cost of fifteen hundred dollars. Farsace cannot hope to recoup his production costs for the price per copy is one dollar. Get it, for it is certain to become a collector's item. The

address is 187 North Union Street, Rochester, New York.

## SCIENCE FICTION SPOTLIGHT

**THIS SPACE-CONSCIOUS WORLD:** Everyone is well aware of all the newspaper publicity being given rocketry and space travel lately. The projected space satellite, of course, is accountable for most of the contemporary interest. While most of the publicity has been concerned with descriptions and diagrams of the "basketball," there have appeared some rather eyebrow-lifting statements, made by staid, conservative men of science.

For instance, Erik Bergaust, editor of *Aero Digest Magazine*, writing in *Pegasus Magazine* (published by the Fairchild Engine & Airplane Corporation), says that manned space ships will, within the next ten years, attain speeds of 20,000 mph to teach a satellite orbiting 800 miles above the earth. Conversely, the same *Aero Digest Magazine* has stated that the U. S. space satellite program has "degenerated into a celestial boondoggle," and that a costly speed-up is imperative. *Aero Digest* said jealousy, bureaucracy and buck-passing is slowing Project Vanguard to a slow walk. And it lashed out at the project's neglect of Army ordinance which "has more experience in launching large rocket missiles than the Navy . . ."

And, for the first time a prominent man of science, speaking to a group of scientists, has touched on intergalactic travel and speeds faster than light. H. E. Canney, Jr. (of the American Bell Aircraft Company) told the International Astronautical Federation that they must not rule out the possibility of ships speeding between the galaxies at thousands of times the speed of light at some time "in the very distant, unforeseeable future."

Dr. Wernher von Braun (chief of the guided missile development division at Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama) was also in the news again. He predicted that very soon after the establishment of the first unmanned satellite, a manned satellite would follow. Said von Braun, "The task of projecting a crew into an orbit amounts essentially to replacing the relatively small rockets."



**NEWS AND VIEWS:** Just saw Science Fiction Theater's version of Stanley G. Weinbaum's "The Adaptive Ultimate." Retitled "Beyond Returns," it was a fairly accurate rendition of this 1935 *Astonishing* story. Ivan Tors apparently has a hit with this program, and it may be for the simple reason that he is keeping the plots as basic as possible. No space opera on S-F Theater as yet. Also—basic economics—simple plots mean small budgets.

... Away back in 1930 Jim Nicholson was Vice-President of Forry Ackerman's "Boys Scientific Fiction Club". Today Jim is producing an s-f flicker, "The Day the World Ended;" and Ackerman-client Paul Blaisdell has the job of creating the required mutant.

The *New York Post* continues to print science fiction regularly in its *Week End Magazine*. Stories have appeared by such authors as Wollheim, van Vogt, Asimov, Ackerman, & Lieber.... Curt Siodmak has written "The Attack of the Flying Saucers" for Columbia. *Hapna!* (Sweden's s-f magazine) is serializing his famous "Donovan's Brain," while "Riders to the Stars" will appear in Germany's *Utopia*.

The science fiction world lost a firm supporter when Dr. J. A. Winter passed away recently. Dr. Winter—known primarily for his introduction to L. Ron Hubbard's "Dianetics"—was also a science fiction reader from way back, and an attendee at many New York s-f gatherings. He will be missed. And a belated report on the death of A. Hyatt Verrill is apropos at this time. Verrill wrote the first non-reprint serial published in an s-f magazine (*Beyond the Pole*, *Amazing Stories*, October & November, 1926). This was followed by many more stories in *Amazing* through 1934. With the exception of a solitary short story in *Fantastic Adventures* in 1939, Verrill ended his s-f writing career in 1934. Old-timers will recall this explorer-writer's archaeological novels with nostalgia. And a moment of silence is due this giant of yesteryear, whose stories played such an important part in the formative stages of magazine science fiction.

*Playboy* for September featured a double-page spread in color showing fantasy magazines circa 1933-35. Many of the Brundage nudes were on display, as well as the sadistic covers of *Terror Tales* and

*Dime Mystery*. The article's purpose was to point out that today's fare is tame compared to that of a couple decades ago. Magazines utilized for the article were borrowed from "Dr. Weaver Wright of Miskatonic University."

Stories by Robert Randall will soon be appearing in various science fiction magazines; the s-f world is herewith advised that "Robert Randall" is Bob Silverberg and Randall Garrett working in collaboration.... And the same applies to "Gordon Aghill".... Youthful fan David Ish has sold a short story to *New World Writing*. Titled "The Fantasy People," it is, in reality, a fictionized version of last year's *Met-rocon*.

When we informed Forry Ackerman that Richard Franklin Madle saw the light of day November 15th (following Robert A. Madle, Jr. by a scant ten years and 9 months) he immediately sent back the following November birthday information. We pass it along in case anyone wants to send cards in 1956. Wilson Tucker (24th); Forry Ackerman (25th); E. Everett Evans (30th); Frederic Brown (29th); Frederic Pohl (26th). Forry's 39th birthday was celebrated with 135 science fiction friends such as Bradbury, Beaumont, Neville, Byrne, Bixby; Riley, Fritch, Olsen, et cetera. The thought occurred to Forry that 135 was the number of people at the First World Convention in 1939. This time the 135 were congregated in his own private dwelling.

**THE 14TH WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION:** Chairman David A. Kyle has just announced that the New York Science Fiction Convention will be held at the Biltmore Hotel September 1, 2, and 3, 1956. And the Guest of Honor will be Arthur C. Clarke, one of the three most prominent s-f personalities in the world today. Arthur C. Clarke's science fiction and science factual books have sold more than a million copies, two of his most prominent books are "The Exploration of Space" and "Childhood's End." It may be news to some that Clarke was an active s-f fan back in the '30's and published and wrote for many of the English fan journals. Wiser choice for Guest of Honor could not have been made.

We'll have lots more to tell you about



and you just might want to pick up Frederick H. Brennan's "One of Our H Bombs is Missing" (Gold Medal 25¢) Stravon Publishers have brought out a nonfiction "Key to Interplanetary Travel" at 25¢.

*The 2nd Southeastern Science Fiction Conference:* The Carolina S-F Society will be the hosts to fandom March 3 and 4 in Charlotte, North Carolina. SECON II will be held at the Hotel Charlotte with the festivities getting underway Saturday afternoon. At this writing, nothing too specific can be mentioned concerning the program. However, Larry Shaw (editor of *Infinity*) will be present and will be one of the featured speakers. The committee is also attempting to bring one of the foremost men of science to the affair. Other writers and editors are expected, also. Chairman of the affair is Robert A. Madle, while Ian Macauley is handling the publicity. Registration is \$1, and all interested are invited to communicate with Madle, address at the bottom of the fanzine section of this department.

#### THE FANZINES

the forthcoming giant convention (which should be the ultimate in fan conventions) next issue. In the meanwhile, the Convention Committee can make adequate use of your \$2 registration fee right now. Make sure that you receive all information and progress reports as they come off the press. At the same time you will become a member of the committee and assist immeasurably in the early financing. If you should not attend the convention, a program booklet will be mailed you. Join right away. The address is Box 272, Radio City Station, New York 19, New York.

*The Pocketbooks:* A few of the latest releases in the softcover field are: "Adventures On Other Planets," anthology, edited by Donald A. Wollheim (Ace Books, 25¢); "The Girls From Planet 5," novel by Richard Wilson; "Caviar," general s-f, fantasy, and non-fantasy collection by Theodore Sturgeon; "Another Kind," Chad Oliver collection—these three from the revived Ballantine Books at 35¢ each. One you might not notice is "The Naked and the Damned," by Robert Shafer, an invasion-of-America type (Popular Library, 25¢);

**L**ATELY, QUITE a few fan publications from Canada have been finding their way into our mailbox; despite the fact that they have no Canadian professional magazine to rally about, these boys are an enthusiastic bunch. Their fan publications are almost invariably well-mimeographed, interesting, and of definite interest to American readers. After all, Canadians are almost American, rather than almost British. (This is mentioned merely as a statement of fact, and is not to be misconstrued as pro-American or anti-British sentiment.)

*Canadian Fandom* (20¢ from William D. Grant, 11 Burton Road, Toronto 10, Ontario) is one of the oldest fanzines being published today. It is now in its 13th year, and displays no signs of senility, even though it is an ancient in the ephemeral fanzine world. *Canfan* (as it is affectionately called) is a magazine of general-reader interest, as compared to some which specialize in the inner-circle activities of s-f fandom. It is comprised of news and gossip columns, controversial articles (on religion, politics, and like that), and reminiscences of "the good old days." As fanzines go, *Canfan* is a good one.

*A Bas* (25¢ from Boyd Raeburn, 9 Glenvalley Drive, Toronto 9, Canada) is a bi-monthly, the seventh issue of which we have on hand. One of the primary purposes of *A Bas* is to bring to light—and strike at resoundingly—some of the stupidities and foibles which seem to appear with consistency in the science fiction world. Several active fans are dealt with in a subtle, but unmerciful, manner in the running commentary, "Derelicti Derogation." Then there is usually an article on sports cars, inasmuch as Boyd Raeburn is a sports car enthusiast. (We suppose it is permissible to spread the gospel of sportscarism in the s-f world—assuming Boyd also does the reverse and propagates s-f amongst his racing cohorts.) There is considerable other meat in this issue. Of particular interest is Alex Kirs' burlesque of the typical homosexual novel which seem to be overloading our newsstands today. And we must not neglect to mention "The Vice," which is the title of Richard Geis' critical fanzine commentary. Nor can Wilson "Bob" Tucker's original humorous short story be left unmentioned. *A Bas* is a good two-bit's worth.

*Gasp!* (edited by Gerald Stewart, 166 McRoberts Avenue, Toronto 10, Ontario. No price listed, but a pair of thin dimes should net you a sample copy.) This is the third, and last, of contemporary Canadian fanzines. And, like the two preceding ones, it is a fine effort. *Gasp!* is quite similar to *A Bas* in that it seems to be on a divine mission of killing off the "fugg-heads." (It should be mentioned that "fugghead" is a fan-coined term which can be applied to anyone disliked by—or considered stupid by—the person using the appellation. In our opinion it is a grossly-overused term.)

Bob Tucker takes up the cudgel and viciously whacks some of the fuggheaded (ugh!—that word again) professionals. No names are mentioned, so a slander-suit is precluded. Then there is some more about sports cars, with a defense of publishing this type of article in a fanzine. It appears that Alfred Coppel, Mari Wolf, and sundry others, drive sports cars. Therefore, s-f and sportscarism are interrelated. Could be.

Of vital interest is the inclusion of the results of Bob Tucker's "Fan Survey." The results show the average fan to be 25 years old; 49% smoke; 25% are married; 78%

(of the unmarried ones) date; and 78% indulge in some sort of sexual activity. (Hmmm. Wonder what the married ones do.) 42% of fandom are Protestant; 9% Catholic; 35% Atheist or Agnostic; remainder are Jewish, Buddhist, Universalist, Humanist, and so on. The favorite authors are Heinlein, Sturgeon, and Bradbury; favorite magazines are *Asiouding*, *Fantasy & SF*, and *Galaxy*; and favorite fanzines are *Psychotic*, *Hyphén*, and *Grue*. There is a lot more to the survey. So if you want to know what fans are made of and what makes them tick, here is your chance.

**J D—THE JACK DANIELS** of the Fanzine World (20¢ a copy from Lynn Hickman, Box 4184, Columbia, South Carolina.) Formerly titled *STF Trends*, *J D* is now in its fifth year of publication. In case you're wondering why, Lynn has changed the name of his magazine to *J D* as a token to Jack Daniels whiskey, a supply of which he always seems to have available. Lynn has also just moved back to the Carolinas, and has become an active member of the Carolina Science Fiction Society.

In the current issue (No. 22) Wilkie Conner reminisces about his childhood days of the early thirties. He tells about the magazines published then, and how he spent practically all of his time reading s-f, air-war, and detective pulps. Wilkie says, in discussing the current stf recession, "Most of the stf mags will doubtless revert to pulp format again now that the boom is over." This could be because there are now so many pocket-size publications they no longer receive the display they did at one time. Whereas many dealers stopped selling pulps several years ago, those who still sell them appear to be displaying them more prominently today.

Hal Annas (whose fiction seems to be appearing in more fanzines these days) has a sexy stf story this time, "Red, Hot and Hungry," while editor Hickman reviews fanzines, and Dick Ellington begins a new department of news and comment, "Metro-mania." *J D* is also replete with drawings of chesty gals, if such as that interest you. *J D* is on our recommended fanzine list.

*Science Fiction Review* (Send for a free copy to Richard E. Geis, 1525 N.E. Ains-

worth, Portland 11, Oregon.) Formerly *Psychotic* (mentioned as the No. 1 fanzine in the Tucker survey), *Science Fiction Review* continued to appear bi-monthly, and continues to observe the professional science fiction scene with a perceptive eye and a scalpel in hand. Each issue one or two of the newsstand magazines are reviewed in detail by editor Geis, while Noah McLeod—although no Damon Knight—keenly analyzes the latest books. Then Harlan Ellison has his "Letter From New York" and Fred Chappell appears with a department called "The Goldfish Bowl." SFR is the type of fanzine the average science reader can thoroughly enjoy for it concerns itself with magazine and book s-f, rather than the activities of fans. Send for your free copy today.

*Cry of the Nameless Ones* (Box 92, 920 3rd Avenue, Seattle 4, Washington, two for 15¢.) This is the club publication of *The Nameless Ones*, the local Seattle s-f club, and appears monthly. The type of material featured by this zine has always appealed to us, but the method of reproduction in the early issues was none too good and was, in fact, sometimes unread-

able. However, this fault has been rectified and *The Nameless Ones* now issue a mighty fine little magazine. Each issue rates all of the magazine and pocketbook s-f (a composite rating of the club members). This is something we haven't seen since the days of *Fantasy Magazine*. A more comprehensive review of current promags is also usually included.

Burnett R. Toskey has been, for the past couple issues, discussing and analyzing the first several years of *Amazing Stories*. There is also a movie and TV column and some book reviews. Several months ago this group compiled and published a pocketbook index for 1953-1955 which is a valuable tool for collectors. We uncovered from this list quite a few of which we had been unaware. (15¢ is what they ask for the index—worth every penny of it.) While the mineoing could stand some improvement, the general content and effort involved in the publication of *Cry* compels us to recommend it.

Send all fanzines for review to Robert A. Madle, 1620 Anderson Street, Charlotte 5, North Carolina.



## A Thrilling Feature Novelet of Midnight Mystery

### OH, MURDER MINE!

by H. C. Butler

A New "Cesare  
Borgia" story

### GOD REST YE, MRS. QYMPEN

by John Tara

The Latest "Simon Ark" Mystery

### THE WITCH IS DEAD!

by Edward D. Hoch

Look for  
the April

## FAMOUS

## DETECTIVE STORIES



It all started when a writer named Honzo — who, like everyone else, was the greatest writer on Jenon — dreamed up a situation wherein somebody did something *wrong*.

# THE MAN WHO LEFT PARADISE

by **RUSS WINTERBOTHAM**



*Illustrated by Luton*

**A** NYBODY you can name has his individual dream of his own particular Paradise, where everything is perfect. But just in case someone hasn't got enough imagination to figure one out—or maybe he's looking around for an improved Utopia—there's the planet Jenon, which is made to order for dreamers and nondreamers alike.

It has a wonderful climate; its axis is vertical to its orbit around its sun—a G-type called XY 5353—so you pick the temperature you want from the tropics to the Arctic and it'll always be the same. Its mountains are arranged so that it always has the right amount of rain and plenty of sunshine. There are no wild animals, poisonous plants, insects or snakes, and the fishing is wonderful.

The science is probably the greatest in the Galaxy; they've done away with all diseases, and they've even conquered old age—so that everyone has a life expectancy of about 1000 years. There's no war and no politics. And no sin and no mistakes.

Now to have a world without war, politics, sin and error is impossible until you consider how much heredity and environment has to do with human nature. The scientists of Jenon have made everyone good-looking, generous, honest, truthful and pleasant. Almost everybody can be witty and intelligent anytime he wants. Instead of having a government, the entire planet is run by a board of directors, and since the board is chosen by lot, nobody is envious, or jealous because someone is an official in the government. In fact

nobody is jealous or envious about anything. That's been bred out of the race too.

But there was one thing the scientists and the board of directors and the people themselves couldn't get rid of without putting something worse in its place: That was imagination. Without imagination, you get stupidity, and the people of Jenon wisely preferred the former to the latter.

Because the people had imagination, there were lots of writers on the planet; everything they wrote got published, because the editors were too kind and too nice to reject anything. And everybody on the planet bought and read everything that every editor published; it really was a Heaven.

One of these writers—whom like everyone else was the greatest writer on Jenon—was named Honzo. One day, when his imagination was clicking off a thousand words an hour and every idea was perfect, he dreamed up a situation wherein somebody did something *wrong*. The first thing he knew, he had ideas that were full of sin and wickedness—and things nobody ever did on Jenon.

"It's too fantastic," said Honzo. "Nobody would ever read such trash."

And so he did the favorite trick of all fiction writers on all of the worlds except Jenon. When they can't lie convincingly, they tell the truth. So he wrote a non-fiction work entitled: "Does Sin Exist?"

Of course it was purely theoretical, but it caused a lot of talk; and the scientists—who knew almost everything—decided that it might be a pretty good idea to investigate. So they built a fleet of space ships and sent them off in every direction to explore all the planets they could reach and study the manners and most of all civilized races.

**A**S A RESULT, nearly every planet within a radius of 25 light years had flying-saucer scares and when the ships got back to Jenon they brought

a surprising report. Sin existed almost everywhere, except on Jenon; in addition, there were such things as bad climate, deserts, high humidity and wars. Even diseases were pretty bad in some places; and there was a strange thing called poverty, which seemed to be pretty bad.

Hukabran, the chairman of the board of directors, called a special meeting as a result. A committee was named to study sin and unpleasantness, so the planet could be prepared to deal with these things if they ever cropped up.

The committee thought it over, and announced—with its usual infallibility—that heredity and environment being what they are, sin would have as much chance on Jenon as a snowball on Mercury, or any other planet close to a sun.

"However," said Blufu, the committee head, "we feel that we owe Author Honzo a debt of gratitude for giving us something to think about."

Chairman Hukabran rose, his grin spreading over his pink little face like syrup over a pancake, a pink pancake of course, and he rapped his gavel.

"Indeed, I think we do owe something to Author and Citizen Honzo," he said. "Never in my memory have I had so much fun as I've had listening to these reports on sin." He cleared his throat and asked: "Perhaps there is something you would like to have us do for you?"

Honzo, who had been attending the meeting because it was his duty, rose and looked steadily at each one of the board members in turn. "Gentlemen," he said, "if sin is so much fun, why don't we get a little of it here on Jenon. It seems to me that our lives are too long and too dull."

Chairman Hukabran was shocked at the suggestion; his chubby little body almost shuddered at the thought. He turned his little, beady eyes on Honzo's gaunt, bony frame and said: "You're



jesting!" His voice was almost reprimanding, but not disagreeable.

"No, sir," said Honzo, "I'm not. Of course, I wouldn't approve of unbridled wickedness; but I'm sure we'd have a lot of fun if we had a few cheap crooks and some liars and cheats running around. Not enough to let things get out of hand, you understand, but just enough to keep life from being dull."

Several of the board members gasped.

"Let me explain," said Honzo. "The trouble here is that we're so dadblamed good and honest and sweet that we don't appreciate ourselves. Just think how happy your wives would be if they knew a woman that had a wife-beater for a husband! And one petty thief would make us honest men look pretty good. You see, the way things are now, temperance, honesty and ethics don't mean any more than red, yellow and green. In fact, less—because you can get a contrast with colors, and being good doesn't do anything for anybody if everybody's a saint."

Everyone—being intelligent—was beginning to get the point. "There's a lot in what you say, Author, Citizen and Brother Honzo," said Chairman Hukabran. "The only trouble is that heredity has made it well-nigh impossible for any of us native sons to be a natural-born sinner."

"Maybe we could get our scientists to manufacture a crook," suggested Blufu. He was a manufacturer himself, and he liked to make things that lightened the toil of his fellow-men.

"That's a good idea," said Hukabran. "We'll get the scientists to design us a crook to help us appreciate ourselves."

**W**ITHIN three weeks the scientists of Jenon had created designs for a sinner. He was to be a lazy, worthless, no-account thief, scoundrel, rogue, rascal and liar. There were a number of safety-features incorporated to protect

people, in case the robot crook got out of hand; but he was designed to amuse people, and cause some excitement, and to make the honest men and women look upon themselves with pride.

Designers and craftsmen took the plans, and within another three weeks the first model was ready for a test. He was so much like a person that he looked alive. He was nice-looking, because it wouldn't have been worthy of them to manufacture anything ugly. He was tall; he was dressed neatly and he had good manners. But the electronics were rigged so that he couldn't tell the truth, and that he would cheat anybody before or after the drop of a hat. He wouldn't work, and he always did things wrong.

The only trouble with Sinner No. 1 was that everybody knew that he was Sinner No. 1. If they hadn't heard of him, or seen his picture in the paper (everybody read everything; so everybody saw his picture), they would have spotted him because he was always doing the wrong thing. At first the robot was a novelty; but after the newness wore off, people just ignored him. When he came around, they locked their doors so he couldn't steal anything.

Sinner No. 1 wound up sitting in alleys writing dirty words on the fences. He was a tremendous failure—the first one in many centuries—so the board of directors condemned the planet's first criminal in a geological age to the junkyard.

"I still think the idea was a good one," said Hukabran, "but the trouble is, he lacked talent for sinning."

"The ideal sinner must be a hypocrite," Honzo replied. "He must *appear* to be like everyone else, and he must seem to act like everyone else; his dirty work must be done on the sly."

"Perhaps our manufacturers could build a hypocrite," suggested Blufu.

"No," said Honzo. "I'll handle Sin-

ner No. 2 myself; I've got some ideas on the subject."

So the author retired to his attic, where he wrote his works, and solved the problem. Honzo, besides being a great writer, was a great humanitarian. There wasn't much room for a humanitarian on Jenon, which had no sociological problems; but the need for a crook brought this latent talent to the surface. Honzo outlined a plan for himself to be a sinner and a hypocrite.



A FEW NIGHTS later, he tied a handkerchief over the lower part of his face and stole a *no parking* sign from the principal street of the city. Then he went to a friend's house, removing the handkerchief in the meantime, and borrowed a book, intending not to return it. He went to a pay telephone and called up Chairman Hukabran, using a lead slug to make the call.

The telephone company raised a big

hue and cry about the slug, but Chairman Hukabran was delighted. He issued a proclamation, announcing his joy in the fact that there was a crook in the city. When the parking sign was discovered to be missing, the entire police force took a holiday, in order not to hamper the outlaw if he wished to commit more crimes.

On the following day, Honzo tried to kiss the newlywed bride who occupied the first floor apartment; but she wouldn't let him.

Then he bought a bottle of whisky and got drunk. However, on the following day he had a hangover; he decided that he would not be intemperate, but he would sin in other ways.

The next day, he tried to steal a loaf of bread at the supermarket, and the manager, perceiving his action, thrust two more loaves in a sack and gave them to him.

"I want everybody to know that I'm civic minded," said the manager. "If we're going to have crime, you can depend on me to support it."

Honzo tried lying, but everyone knew he was a fiction writer, and thought he was only practicing.

By this time, Honzo could see that he was not cut out to be a crook, much less a hypocrite. There was no lack of cooperation; the trouble was that everybody cooperated too much.

Sinner No. 2 was a dismal failure, and Honzo admitted defeat at the next meeting of the board of directors.

"What shall we do?" asked the frustrated Hukabran.

"We'll conquer it, somehow," said Honzo. "Our scientists have accomplished many seemingly-impossible tasks in the past. I'm sure we can take care of this problem."

The board got out the reports on sin that they had received from other planets and studied them. Sin was so easy everywhere but on Jenon.

"It's possible," said Honzo, "that our bodies have lost the sin gene and

that we should inject a new strain into our race from some other planet."

"I wouldn't advise it," said Hukabran, who was a scientist. "We have a carefully-balanced physiology, and if we got our genes tangled up with those of another race, there's no telling what might happen."

"I'd almost be willing to take the chance," said Honzo, "except that there's an easier solution."

"What's that?" chorused the eager board of directors.

"Our space explorers found sin and wickedness almost everywhere," he said; "what's to prevent us from importing a few sinners just to pep things up. We'd pay them a good salary, and they'd probably be expert."

"We can get the best from the most sinful planet," exclaimed Blufu.

Once more they dug their noses into the reports. The most likely planet to furnish good sinners was in the Solar System, on a planet called Earth; it had more sin than anywhere. Almost everybody was crooked—lied, did naughty things, and quite a few went in for sin in a big way.

"I think that if any place can supply us with a first class scawag, Earth can," said Chairman Hukabran.

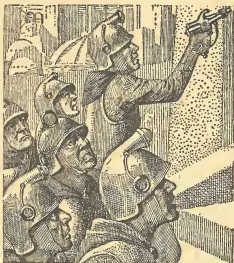
"Then I consider it my duty to fetch one," said Honzo.

**HONZO** WAS almost disappointed by the reception he got when he landed near Chicago. The people seemed so gracious and hospitable that he wondered for awhile if he wasn't in the wrong place. Nobody even picked his pocket.

He was feted and dined, greeted and cheered. He met politicians, and he didn't discern a crook in any of them. He learned that when they said Chicago was a windy place, nobody lied. When he went to a burlesque show and watched young women disrobe, he heard only admiring applause. There

was certainly no wrongdoing to be construed from this kind of conduct.

"Don't you have wars?" he asked,



remembering the report he had received on the earth.

"We have just fought a war to end war," said one of the politicians; "from now on the earth is going to be a mighty peaceful place."

"We abolished war on our planet, too," said Honzo; "we never fight."

The politician raised his eyebrows. His name was McGrue, and he was a big power in Washington, Honzo was told. "I'm glad you told me that," he said. "There have been disquieting reports that you were here on a mission of espionage as a forerunner of an interplanetary war. Now I can tell the President that you are here on a peaceful mission."

"You might call it a sightseeing mission," smiled Honzo, "except that there's one small item I'd like to take care of while I'm here."

"Yes?" again McGrue's eyebrows raised.

"My people have admired the earth from afar," said Honzo. "A few years ago they visited the earth in flying-saucers, but did not land—"

"Ah yes," said McGrue. "I remem-

ber that; we were quite mystified about it."

"But they learned that you have talent here that we would like to import. We would like to entice a few of your criminals to come to live on Jenon."

"Criminals?" McGrue could not believe his ears. "What good are criminals?"

Honzo explained the predicament Utopia was in. McGrue listened quietly, nodding his head from time to time. "Are you sure you have no wars there?"

"Oh no!" exclaimed Honzo, realizing that no self-respecting crook would willingly leave a world without war to live in a war-torn world. "We haven't had wars for millions of years."

"You wouldn't even know how to fight a war, would you?"

"My goodness, no!" exclaimed Honzo.

The politician slapped Honzo on the back. "Welcome to earth, Mr. Honzo!"

"Thank you, sir, but I've already been welcomed."

"I mean as a permanent resident," said McGrue.

"I—I do not understand."

"Of course you don't, son—but just as you need sinners for a contrast, we need saints. And if we kidnap you, your world wouldn't be able to wage a war to get you back; so we'll just keep you around. Maybe we'll be able to appreciate our sins, now that we've got a saint for comparison."

Honzo batted his bewildered eyes. He looked at the politician, and knew him for a cheat and a fraud—yes, even a kidnapper. But he didn't feel very angry. Now that burlesque show wasn't bad at all; and there were lots of other interesting things to do that he'd never thought of. Honzo supposed they were sinful, but they looked interesting.

"I think I shall like it here," he said; "but are you sure some of your people wouldn't like to live on Jenon?"

"If they would, they ain't human," said McGrue.



### ***Tops in Mystery Fiction***

*and the current issue features*

#### **REMAINS TO BE SEEN**

*by Wadsworth Nealey*

#### **THE PARROT IN COW'S LANE**

*by Edward A. Dieckmann*

#### **HIDING PLACE**

*by Basil Wells*

*These, and others, are in the  
May issue of*



## **SMASHING DETECTIVE STORIES**



## A Department of Letters and Comment

### CHEERS...

Dear Mr. Lowndes,

With the February issue, SFQ returned to its old standard. The best story, "Why Should I stop", was either up to, or beyond, the best published by any magazine in the field. Second place to "Think No Evil"—despite the resemblance to the typical *Galaxy* froth, I liked it. "Honor" was fair, despite the "gimmick" at the end—give it third, slightly ahead of "Love Me Again". Last place, and thumbs down, to "Elected".

Best thing in the issue, and one of the funniest pieces of the year, was the article by "Quien Sabe". Dunno who he is—though that style is awfully familiar—but he's good. Book reviews weren't quite up to Knight's usual style, meaning they were only slightly more interesting than the next best in the field. "Inside Science Fiction" was a little dull, to me, because I've already read (and written) so many con reports. The parody on "Slam" wasn't up to Garrett's job on "The Demolished Man" in *Science Fiction Stories*—you should have brought them out a little farther apart.

I'm afraid the "wonderfulness" of science fiction is limited to the kind of stories which any given individual read at the time he entered the field. Thus, you (and presumably Moskowitz) like the stories by Verne, Wells, Schachner, Doc Smith, etc.—most of which would bore the h— out of the average modern fan. Coming in at the

beginning of the postwar boom, I like Heinlein, deCamp, Sturgeon, del Ray, etc., and feel that only a few of the "new" authors—like Chad Oliver—can equal them. The fan entering the field now will, several years in the future, talk about "the good old days" of Budrys, Sheckley, Godwin, Gunn, Hensley, and Tabakow. A few authors like Asimov, Leinster, Brackett, and others will be remembered by more than one "generation" of fans; but the "top" writers will always be the ones who were at their height at the time the fans was discovering the wonders of stff.

Freas' cover was one of the best I've ever seen anywhere. The gleeful expression on the face of our hero (?) is wonderful. Interior illos are steadily dropping in quantity, quality, and originality.

Now for the letters, and S.F. Cary. He says that "every reasonable theory works on every given subject". I must confess that I have to agree with him 100%. However, just what is a "reasonable" theory? To me, it is any theory that I can believe in—to Mr. Cary, it is any theory that he can believe in, whether or not his beliefs correspond to mine. So that doesn't get us anywhere, because, despite the fact that we both know our theories are reasonable, we could both be wrong. The only way to find out whether a theory is actually reasonable or not is to see if it *does* work, naturally, if it works, it's reasonable. So,

[Turn To Page 82]

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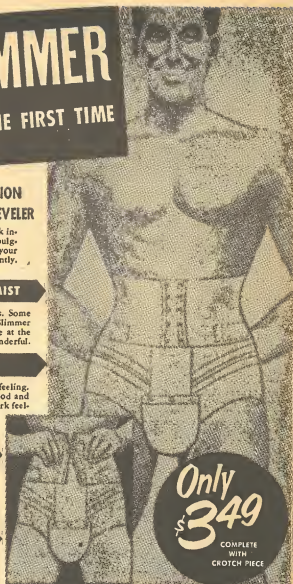
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the question remains of just how many reasonable theories there are on any given subject. Possibly I'm guilty of oversimplifying when I say only one theory will work—on the other hand, Mr. Cary has gone on record as saying that no theory should ever be attacked. And I'm still saying that they won't *all* work, and how do you find out which one does if you don't discuss them?

Of course, theories in the field of human relations tend to become complicated. It is undoubtedly possible to sell an item to some people by holding them down and threatening to knock their teeth out if they don't buy it. (In fact, Christianity was "sold" to most American Indians in just this manner.) However, while this theory can be said to "work", it doesn't work in the sense I meant. Actually, in the fields of salesmanship and government, Cary's question are pretty devoid of meaning. I didn't say I knew just which theory worked—I'm not omnipotent. So far, rather than having every theory work, as Cary suggests, we don't have *any* that work with any reasonable degree of accuracy. Does this mean that there isn't any that ever will work, or just that we haven't found the right one yet? Because the Romans didn't have electricity, does that mean that electricity wouldn't have worked then? (Don't any patriots write in and say that democracy works, either—after having you define which system of democracy you mean, I can prove that it has failed in a majority of cases.)

A theory of diet that will work? I don't know just what Cary wants it to do; but once we learn enough about how different foods, vitamins, etc. affect the human body, we'll have one that will do anything possible for a dietary theory. You say all foods don't affect everyone the same—so what? That has nothing to do with theory—a t-v receiver isn't affected by the carrier wave in the same way as a radio receiver, either; but they both operate under electrical theory. One of Cary's troubles is that he is confusing theory with specific applications of that theory—which, of course, must vary with circumstances.

Cary also says that both the wave theory of light, and the theory that it is a stream of particles, have been proven correct. Poo. What was proven was that neither was *entirely* correct. We can use either of them under certain circumstances, but that doesn't mean either is entirely right. Cary doesn't seem to think that it is possible for us to discover an entirely new theory on the subject—which is rather odd, considering his professed open-mindedness.

How do you know the last word on religion has been spoken, Mr. Cary? If there is one that works, does it have to be one of the present-day ones? The purpose of religion is, presumably, two-fold: to grant one a peaceful life on earth, and one in the

hereafter. Considering the state of the world, there is certainly no present-day religion which fulfills the first requirement some of them might, if practiced, but a religion which isn't practiced is a religion that is worthless. On the second requirement, certainly there is only one which works! If you don't believe me, just ask a devout follower of one of them—*any* one—and he'll tell you the same thing. The one that works is his. If you want positive proof, bring someone back from the dead and ask him. And I don't mean at a phoney seance, either.

To get back to the original point, a theory that can't stand attack is a theory that is worthless.

Hope this letter isn't too long, and that, if printed, it stirs up some controversy.

—ROBERT COULSON, N. Manchester, Indiana.

Hmm, I'd define as "democratic" any society where (a) the laws are applicable to all—that is, according to the laws, no individual is above the law; (b) the laws provide for popular consent to all legislation subsidiary to the basic constitutions, and include means of amending and/or repealing legislation (c) the laws provide for peaceful and orderly recall of officials with whom the electorate is dissatisfied (d) the laws define fundamental rights for all citizens, and provide peaceful and orderly means for the redress of wrongs—whether on the part of the state, of officials, or of private citizens. This has worked in practice, and can continue to work, just so long as the citizens maintain sufficient pressure upon officials to keep the honest and responsible; abuses have existed, do exist, and no doubt will recur in the future—but the records show that they can be abated, through process of the laws, when the citizenry takes the proper steps. "Democracy" doesn't work of and by itself; democracy systems work when people work them.

### ...AND JEERS

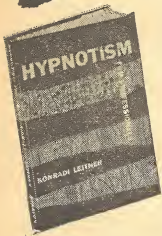
Dear Mr. Lowndes:

Well, now that *Starting* has followed *Planet* to oblivion, the only magazine left to carry on the tradition of pulp science fiction seems to be your own SFQ. To my way of thinking, the great pulp mags of earlier years brought us some of the best science fiction that has ever been written, and it is quite a pity that modern sf trends have forced these magazines out of business.

Yes, the tradition is yours to uphold, but I fear that you'll have to do a great deal better than your February effort if you plan to do so. The stories, as a whole, are trite beyond belief, and some badly written. I read and enjoyed the November is-

[Turn To Page 84]

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After the Trance is Over  
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Induction Among Friends

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sue, but this one is just plain miserable, and that's all there is to it.

To begin with, the cover by Kelly Freas (winner of the Hugo Award for the best s-f artwork of 1954) is just not up to par. The bottom half is acceptable in itself, but the white background and weak title logo spoil everything. Result: a frontpiece that only the full-fledged fan or reader would be drawn to.

Before hacking at the stories individually, here are my over-all ratings: (1) "Why Should I Stop?" by Algis Budrys; (2) "Honor" by Richard Wilson; (3) "Elected" by George Hudson Smith; (4) "Think No Evil" by Harry Warner, Jr.; and (5) "Love Me Again" by Carol Emshwiller.

Budrys' novelet wins first place honors merely because the entire issue was so sub-average. Ordinarily, it would be only a grade-C story. Algis' idea is original enough, but it was poorly carried out—particularly with the use of the letters written by both of you. It, like Freas' cover, is a minor effort by a superior craftsman who has turned out some fine work in the past.

"Honor", although possessing a rather nice twist ending, was, surprisingly enough, poorly written, and can therefore be rated no higher. I have bought a copy of Wilson's new novel, "The Girls From Planet Five", and if it is as bad as this short story, I don't know what I'll do. Lord, this was bad enough as is; I shudder at the very thought of reading 180-plus pages of such rot.

The remaining three shorts, all terrible, deserve no comment other than that, and I'll pass them up in favor of the editorial, which was far, far better. You, in my opinion, write editorials that place second only to those of the master, Ray Palmer, and "Wonderfulness" came at exactly the right time; reading it after the Warner novelet was like a turkey dinner after a plate of beans. I agree with most everything you had to say, but I do believe that writing of this type is on its way back to s-f, and it is coming in *Amazing, Imagination, If*, and your own mags, all of which are generally regarded as second-rate publications.

Oh, almost forgot Randy Garrett's poem-parody of V's "Slam", and wouldn't want to do so, as it is one of the few good things in this issue. Garrett has, in these delightful little verses, come up with the best new idea in s-f writing that I've seen this year. Once he gets enough of them published, I believe that a collection of them in hard-cover form would sell as well or better than some of the inferior anthologies that we readers have been handed lately.

Your last remaining department outside of the letters, which I shall get to in just a moment, is Damon Knight's top-notch book reviews, a sight for sore eyes after pages and pages of drivel. Robert Madle contributes his "Inside S-F", but said very

little that I hadn't already heard in previous reports. My suggestion for this is to shift Madle's column to *Science Fiction Stories*, so that it can appear bi-monthly, and therefore cover the fanmag field a little more adequately. You can always fill in the space with extra letters, or a short-story.

Letters, as expected, are all very interesting, but why all the discussion about astronomy and ESP out of a clear blue sky, eh? I hope you're not aspiring to run a Campbell-type letter department, as that would put the final crusher on SFQ. Please keep them fanish, do you hear me? Fannish!

All in all, here's hoping you do better in the May issue. (Oh yes, I'll still lay SFQ, no matter how poor the stories become.) I know you'll try, and I'll try to look at it with a less critical eye. Just keep going, that's all I ask.

Remember Planet!

—KENN CURTIS, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Don't spare the criticism, Kenn; your jeers at what you disliked made the compliments on what you did that more meaningful.

Years ago, I used to write hot letters of complaint to the various magazines—and often as not my letters would appear surrounded by other letters of praise for the very things I slammed. The editor would comment to the effect that you can't please everything, and note how many readers enjoyed what I found fault with. At the time, this struck me as a rather pathetic dodge, on his part, but now I can see that it wasn't necessarily so. If sales fall off, that indicates something is wrong—of course. But how can the editor tell just what the majority of his readers want, when the comments are so divided that in many cases it's almost fifty-fifty?

Well, this editor isn't trying to take the easy way out, and relax upon the pile of approvals. I raise the point again and again because I want to know—and the only way I can learn, outside of the sales figures, is somehow to get more readers to write in, straight from the shoulder. I do know, of course, that the tone of the February issue was not the same as that of the November issue—which you enjoyed. When one issue goes over quite well, as that one seemed to, I try to avoid giving the same thing right away.

## DOWN WITH LISTINGS

Dear Bob:

At one time I feel I could have been qualified as a true-blue genowwyne letter-hack, having had around thirty letters published in the various mags. But for some reason I became tired of writing words of wisdom to the various editors, without ever bothering to analyze the reason(s) why.

Of course it is obvious that being much

[Turn To Page 86]

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## SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

younger, I was not so mature. Discounting, of course, the fact that I may or may not be mature now. At least I am so legally. And not being so, many of my letters were typical pure drivel of story and fan-comments.

Too many other readers were doing the same. What controversies there were were repeated over and over, as new readers came into the fold, and older ones left. I honestly don't believe that there has been an original thought expressed in the letters in at least a decade.

Still I appreciate the fact that editors need to know what the desires of the readers are. And many readers won't bestir themselves to let him know, unless there is promise of some egoboo to go with it.

But why do so many editors have to inflict their readers with Joe Blow's story-by-story listing of his likes and dislikes? I am not the editor, and I don't give a damn whether or not Joe thinks "Goose Men of Mars" was peachy-keen or not.

So please, try to glean as much of this as possible from your reader's columns. To list what I call grievous errors on your part would take a novel, but a couple of examples follow: from the February issue, the letters of Barry Gardner and W. C. Brant. From previous issues, I must shamefacedly say I can offer no such examples, inasmuch as such issues have been tossed into my files which have gone completely awry. But I am sure it wouldn't take much searching to find others of the ilk.

To follow my own advice, my only comment on the issue is that "Honor", is the only story I couldn't read and enjoy. Comments on the contest are under separate cover.

To close, I wish SFQ a long and healthy life, seeing that it alone remains as the last of the old guard pulps. (I do not count Palmer's switch with *Other Worlds* as anything other than an attempt to revive a sinking ship that I feel is doomed to failure.)

—BOB HOSKINS, Lyons Falls, N.Y.

I try for balance in letters as well as in stories, but—particularly in the case of letters—I'm dependent upon what comes in. Some readers enjoy seeing what other readers thought of the stories; some like to see discussions; and some prefer the "fannish" type. So, to answer you and Mr. Curtis simultaneously, I'm not restricting "It Says Here" to any one type of letter—all are welcome, and you'll see the best examples received of each type.

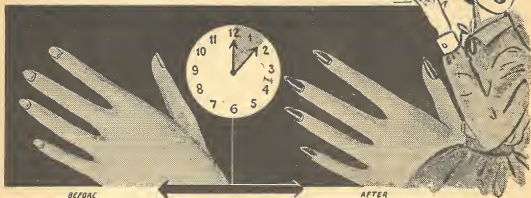
### PARTIAL AGREEMENT

Dear Sir:

First of all, a few words of praise. The Nov. issue of SFQ was the first issue that I had seen in a long time; the only reason

[Turn To Page 88]

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## **SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY**

I bought it was because there wasn't anything else, and I wanted to read SF even if it turned out to be mediocre. I say this because I distinctly remember thinking (quite some time ago) that SFQ stunk to high heaven. Imagine my surprise then when it actually turned out to be a top grade mag. I wonder which has changed, me or the mag?

Now a few comments on the Feb. issue. (I waited this long to be sure Nov. wasn't just an extra good number) "So Help Me" made up for everything else in the issue, I don't know exactly why but I liked it. The "Slam" review in verse was also top drawer and of course I enjoyed "Inside Science Fiction".

As to your editorial I can't go along with you all the way. I agree with Barry Gardner that the "sense of wonder" is connected with the person rather than the story. I felt this when reading my first few sf stories but gradually lost it. I might also add that I later read Verne's stories—and others that you mentioned in your editorial, including "City of Glass"—but felt no "sense of wonder" while reading them.

In reference to Sam Johnson's letter: As I see it Sam, you're all mixed up. For one thing you're leaving out some things. You state that it is impossible to surpass the speed of light in a rocket because the speed of light is constant. Now, I don't exactly see the connection, but you left out something that I consider important. According to Einstein, the velocity of light in a vacuum is independent of the relative velocity of source and observer. This is why the beam of light you referred to wouldn't go the speed of light plus 25000. Furthermore, if you made the earth one frame of reference, and the rocket ship as another, you should be able to see that you can't possibly exceed the speed of light. Besides that, look at all the trouble you would run into if your rocketship even attained the speed of light. The dimensions of the rocketship would be 0, but its mass would be infinite. Time would literally come to a stop.

However, and I want to address this to Mike Chandler especially: You must realize that all we can ever find is a relative truth. Before the advent of modern physics, Newton's laws were *basic* principles, too. How do you know that Einstein is right just because experiments substantiate him? Isn't it true that quite a few theories have been developed from experimental proof only to be proven absolutely wrong later?

To F. W. Zwicky, in regard to that statement in your letter regarding religion: Personally I don't subscribe to the usual religious beliefs but I think that the very existence of the universe and living creatures should be some sort of proof of a

[Turn To Page 90]



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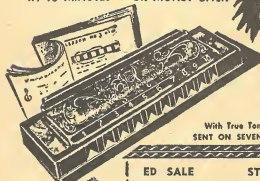
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## SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

higher being. One is forced to hunt for an explanation of the universe and of ourselves, and this seems to be the only explanation as I cannot, because of my basic egocentrism, accept the theory that everything just happened, that is, that it was all accidental.

Well, this thing is getting rather long, so I'll drop out. I should think this letter would provoke a little comment despite that last paragraph, which is rather badly muddled.

—RUSSEL L. BROWN, Palisade, Nebraska

There's a lot to the proposition that the first stories anyone reads, upon encountering science-fiction, make the most lasting impression—and almost any group of readers who started contemporaneously will disagree with other groups as to just what period was the "golden age" of science fiction. Oddly, though, nearly everyone who becomes any kind of science fiction fan is likely, after a few years, to start talking about the "good old days".

The object of the editorial was to try to define the so-called "sense of wonder" business. I didn't mean that "wonderfulness" is a necessary ingredient in a good science-fiction story, nor do I think that it belongs in all stories. But the element has been almost totally missing, it seems to me, for the past few years and it might help if we could get it back, now and then, to give more variety to current science fiction.

### CURTAIN-CALL FOR LUROS

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

I see that SFQ has a new logo. Fine! That, and the new style cover paintings give the magazine a very nice appearance. Give Mr. Luros a pat on the back for me, will you?

Best story of the issue: Harry Warner's "Think No Evil". I've always been partial to a neat twist on the telepathy angle. "Love Me Again", by Carol Emshwiller, was good. It wasn't real science-fiction, of course; your label, "a fable of futurity", tabbed it very neatly.

Richard Wilson's "Honor" was fair, but this racial prejudice theme doesn't need quite so much harping on. I think more people ought to get out and do something about it instead of just sitting around telling the public that we really oughtn't to be prejudiced. Nevertheless, the gimmick of having the Earthmen begin to look like Martians, after taking the longevity juice, saved what would otherwise have been an unconvincing story. After all, the scientific achievements of George Washington Carver haven't eradicated anti-Negro prejudice, but if he'd invented a cure for cancer, say, that just naturally darkened everybody's skin...

Still, I think that the best short in the [Turn To Page 92]

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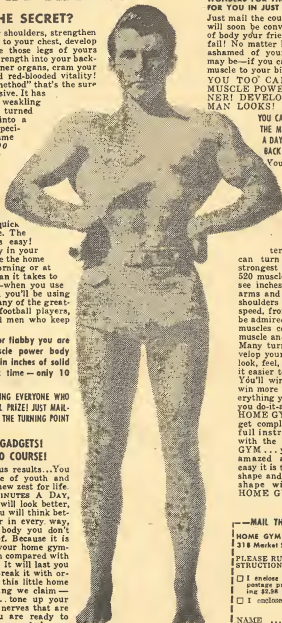
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## SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

issue was George Hudson Smith's "Elected". It reminded me a little of Robert Graves' "Seven Days in New Crete" (*Let The Northwind Rise* was the American title) and his "White Goddess". If Mr. Smith keeps going as he has, he'll be as well-known and well-liked as George O.

"Why Should I stop", by Algis Budrys, was very clever, but I think that "Think No Evil" should have had the cover.

As to the features and departments, they all live up to your usual high standards. I'm always happy to read Damon Knight's book reviews; I don't always like every book he likes, or dislike the ones he pans, but most of the time, we see eye to eye.

The best review of the issue was, of course, Randall Garrett's "Slam". I had already read his "Demolished Man" in *Science Fiction Stories*, and I think "Slam" is equally as good. Can we look forward to more of Mr. Garrett's belly-laugh lampoons?

I'm not too familiar with the "sense of wonder" argument that seems to be raging in the East, but I think your comments on the difference between "wonder" and "wonderfulness" were accurate and penetrating. It may not, as you say, be the most correctest of grammar, but it puts the idea across better; and that, after all, is what a language is for.

That leaves "So Help Me" by Quien Sabe? Frankly, I'm at a total loss. The article was cute, but I'll be darned if I can guess who wrote it. Are you sure there are enough clues? No mislaid type anywhere?

At any rate, I don't know who he is. So help me!

I'll wind this up by thanking you for editing two fine magazines for me to enjoy. If only they came out twice as often.

CARL G. AMES, San Francisco, Calif.

It seemed to me that the whole point about "Honor" was that you don't wear down prejudice—racial, or any other kind—by going out and doing things about it in the sense of making frontal assault: trying to jam through laws, agitating, etc. Telling a man that his viewpoint (which was taught him as part of virtue from his childhood) is wicked, immoral, etc. confirms it rather than weakens it. There are excellent grounds for the belief that the slave question in the Old South could well have been settled peacefully, and more rationally, by the Southerners themselves if Northern agitators hadn't provoked them to the point where they felt they had to defend and justify even what they themselves questioned—as a point of honor. Emancipation came through force and in just about the costliest possible way—not only in blood and destruction, but in the creation of still-enduring hatreds arising from a sense of having been wronged by self-

## IT SAYS HERE

righteous hypocrites with greater numbers and fire-power.

## TO THE POINT

Dear Editor:

I agree with Howard Browne that Modern Science Fiction is through. I, myself prefer straight everyday fantasy. Your February 1956 issue of *Science Fiction Quarterly* was OK, my choice of the best story being "Why Should I Stop?". Damon Knight is an excellent critic, and should stay put. Looking forward to the next SFQ.  
G. R. ANGIADO, Biloxi, Miss.



## BARGAINS

Dear Bob:

Your two science fiction magazines wandered in down here yesterday, for a brief visit before hitting the premature stacks. I noticed that all the stands got a medium-size stack of *Science Fiction Quarterly*, but only one got *Science Fiction Stories*—two copies. I wonder if it is method or madness with your distributors. The terrifying thing about it was that after

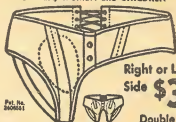
Naturally, I was pleased to see "Stranger" in print in SFQ. I think it is one of the better of my immature sputters, as Gwen Cunningham would say (in SFQ).

I hate to crawl out from under an argument, but I thought you would realize that I was parodying myself to some extent. To quasi-quote the last line of my letter: "Of course, we both know this is exactly what any young writer would have to say." I.e., whether he believed it or not. I frequently take utterly insupportable stands on subjects just for the fireworks. In a fanzine, I argued that men were so superior to women. The terrifying thing but it was that after a while, four or a half-dozen reasonably perceptive people admitted in the face of my "proof" that I was right. Jim Harmon, Brainwasher Grade B. Now I don't say you and the charming Mrs. Cunningham (so sonny boy had a bawty wittle idea, huh, Gwen?) are absolutely right. Who is? And as I say, I'm not physiologically or psycho- logically equipped to admit it if you were. Of course, any individual writer improves with experience, both in life and in writing. I admitted that by postcard upon seeing your editorial remarks. But there are a few qualifications: there are some writers in their fifties and sixties. I could name names and so could you, couldn't you? It's

[Turn Page]

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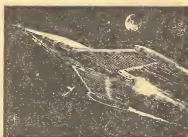
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## SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

a matter of comparing individual against individual, not the same person at different ages. Then there are the vast number of great books and good books written by young and inexperienced persons. In my opinion, (not yours, not Mrs. Cunningham's) in the broader literary sense, the finest science fiction story ever written was created by a seventeen-year-old girl named Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. Then there are authors who, with age and experience, could never equal the work of their youth. Herman Melville comes to mind as an imperfect example. He was no apple-cheeked youngster when he turned out "Moby Dick" but he was never able to do as good later in life. (Again, my opinion.) But these are exceptions (which you granted) so I will humbly admit that you, Sir, are quite correct. You want blood?



To further appease you, I think you now have two of the biggest bargains in science fiction—a 96-page SFQ for 25¢ and a 144-page *Science Fiction Stories* for 35¢. I hope you keep things as they are—viz: that SFQ doesn't go pocket-size and higher-priced, and you don't have to cut back pages. Actually, in spite of everything Bill Crawford told me, I still think 35¢ is an outrageous price to pay for a 128-page digest. Particularly when magazines of other types but similar circulations and formats still sell for only a quarter.

I believe *Science Fiction Stories* is the first magazine in the sf field to increase its number of pages (with or without a price increase) in something like fifteen years! (*Western Action* is the first pulp to add pages in a heck of a long time, too.)

I slyly detect from the copyright notice and the phrase "First Magazine Publication" that James Blish's novel in *Science Fiction Stories* has been published somewhere else, in 1952 under the title "Beaststalk". I'm not a completist collector but this throws me. Where? Incidentally, I think you would have been justified in labeling "Giants in the Earth" a Book-Length Novel. These days the term "novel" in a magazine usually means 25,000 words, not 45,000. (It looks interesting; I'll have to read it.) And Ray Banks' story deserved the appella-

(Turn To Page 96)

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## SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY

tion "Novelet," too. You're too reserved these days; I remember when you thought nothing of running three 10,000 word full-length novels in one issue.

To return to SFQ (you'll have the devil of a time figuring which magazine if you use this in print), I agree with you on the "sense of wonderfulness". Actually, you stand to the left towards Sam Moskowitz on the subject, and I stand a little towards the right with damon knight, James Blish &c. They think the "sense of wonder" is all in the beholder. Sam (and maybe you?) think it is all in the story. I'm in between. There is a certain quality to the old stories, but it depends on the person, too. My stf reading goes back sixteen years to when I was six. (I regularly read *Weird Tales* and *Startling Stories* from six to nine, and after

[Turn To Page 98]

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF

Science Fiction Quarterly published quarterly at Holyoke, Mass., for October 1, 1956

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Louis H. Silberkleit, 241 Church St., New York 13, N. Y. Editor, Robert W. Lowndes, 241 Church St., New York 13, N. Y. Managing editor, Robert W. Lowndes, 241 Church St., New York 13, N. Y. Business manager, Maurice Coyne, 241 Church St., New York 13, N. Y.

2. The owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual member, must be given.) Columbia Publications, Inc., 241 Church St., New York 13, N. Y. Louis H. Silberkleit, 241 Church Street, New York 13, N. Y. Maurice Coyne, 241 Church Street, New York 13, N. Y. Michael I. Silberkleit, 241 Church St., New York 13, N. Y.

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5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: (This information is required from daily, weekly, semiweekly, and triweekly newspapers only.)

LOUIS H. SILBERKLEIT  
(Signature of publisher)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 14th day of October, 1956.

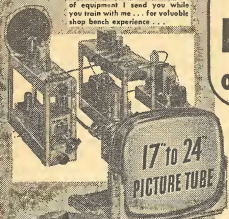
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nine began reading all the rest.) My research reading, so to speak, goes back to the Year One. In the last ten years, I've come across two new ideas in stf (Sam Mines' "Find the Sculptor" and Fritz Leiber's "A Pail of Air") and a few dozen other stories whose technique was deft enough to give a surprize ending. One dozen would be more like it. I seldom get a "Feeling of Wonderfulness" out of re-reading the old, old pulps because I've read so many modern versions of the stories they seem old hat—and I don't have a *nostalgic* feeling about Tremaine Astoundings, only about the Oscar Friend Startlings. The only thing I've found that gives me a "Feeling of Wonderfulness" are, I blushinglly admit, Doc Savage novels and some of the stories in the current British magazine, *Authentic*, in recent years.

I think what the trouble is, to put it in less perceptive and more general terms than you, is that the stories today are *sophisticated*, rather than *innocent*. I think a simple, generalized remedy to the situation would be for writers to write about things they would like to see happen, rather'n what they are *afraid* will happen. Writers are obsessed with literariness (to coin a word?). Their science fiction stories may appear in the cheapest, quadiest pulp available but they like to secretly believe they are worthy of the *Atlantic* or *Martha Folley*. But ideals can be just as literate as neurotic or pathological nightmares.

JIM HARMON, Mt. Carmel, Illinois.

PS—I think a lot of the old pulps besides science fiction had something of a sense of wonder—*Argosy*, *The Shadow*, *The Spider*, *Wings*, *Lone Eagle*, even *Wild West Weekly*. I know it isn't *really*, but I have an uncomfortable suspicion that maybe a sense of wonder is just the product of juvenile writing.

J.H.

Nope, no blood wanted, thanks. You may be right that *Science Fiction Stories* is the first magazine in the science fiction field to increase its number of pages, without a corresponding increase in price, in a number of years—but other titles increased page-counts within the last ten years, upping the price.

"*Beanstalk*" originally appeared in *Ken Crossen's* anthology, "*Future Tense*", which presented both reprints and new stories written especially for that collection. Since the book had a small sale and has not been available for some time, though it appeared in 1952, I felt that very few readers of *Science Fiction Stories* would have seen it before.

True I've labelled short novels and/or long novelets as "novels", but only on direct orders from headquarters and under protest, as it were. (I complied with consenting, you might say.) 30,000 words isn't my idea of a book-length novel, regardless

of general magazine practices, and I won't put that label on a story that length unless explicitly specifically ordered to.

I'm not entirely sure I disagree with *Blish & Knight* that the "wonderfulness" is really only in the reader's eyes; that wasn't what I was discussing, anyway—rather I was trying to make some sort of definition of the term, because enough science fictionists agree that some sort of thing exists so that it doesn't matter whether all agree on specific examples of it.

## INSPIRED

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

After seeing Randall Garrett's verse-review of "Slan", I thought that I would send in my song about "1984"; you might be able to squeeze it into the readers' department. Keep up the good work. SFQ is the most enjoyable magazine on the market.

WILLIAM N. BEARD, Muncie, Indiana

## BIG BROTHER

by William N. Beard

(to be sung to the tune of "Davy Crockett")

In 1984, the people were poor,  
But they never had it so good before.  
If you told the truth, you told a lie,  
And under the chestnut, you'd surely die.

Brother, Big Brother, the man who  
does no wrong.

Take a sip of gin, let it dribble on your chin,  
Then talk about the war, and say that we'll win.

If you think we're wrong, and you hate Big Brother,  
We'll teach you love, 'till you call down your mother.

Brother, Big Brother, the man who  
does no wrong.

If you want romance, you'll have to take a chance,  
'Cause if you're caught, we'll really tan your pants.

In Miniluv there's a man named O'Brien,  
And when he's through with you, you'll surely think you're dyin'.

Brother, Big Brother, the man who  
does no wrong.

So look in the future, and see what's in store,  
If you don't like this, there's a lot, lot more.

War is peace, and we love blood and gore,  
So, we're waiting here for you, in 1984.  
Brother, Big Brother, the man who  
does no wrong.



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